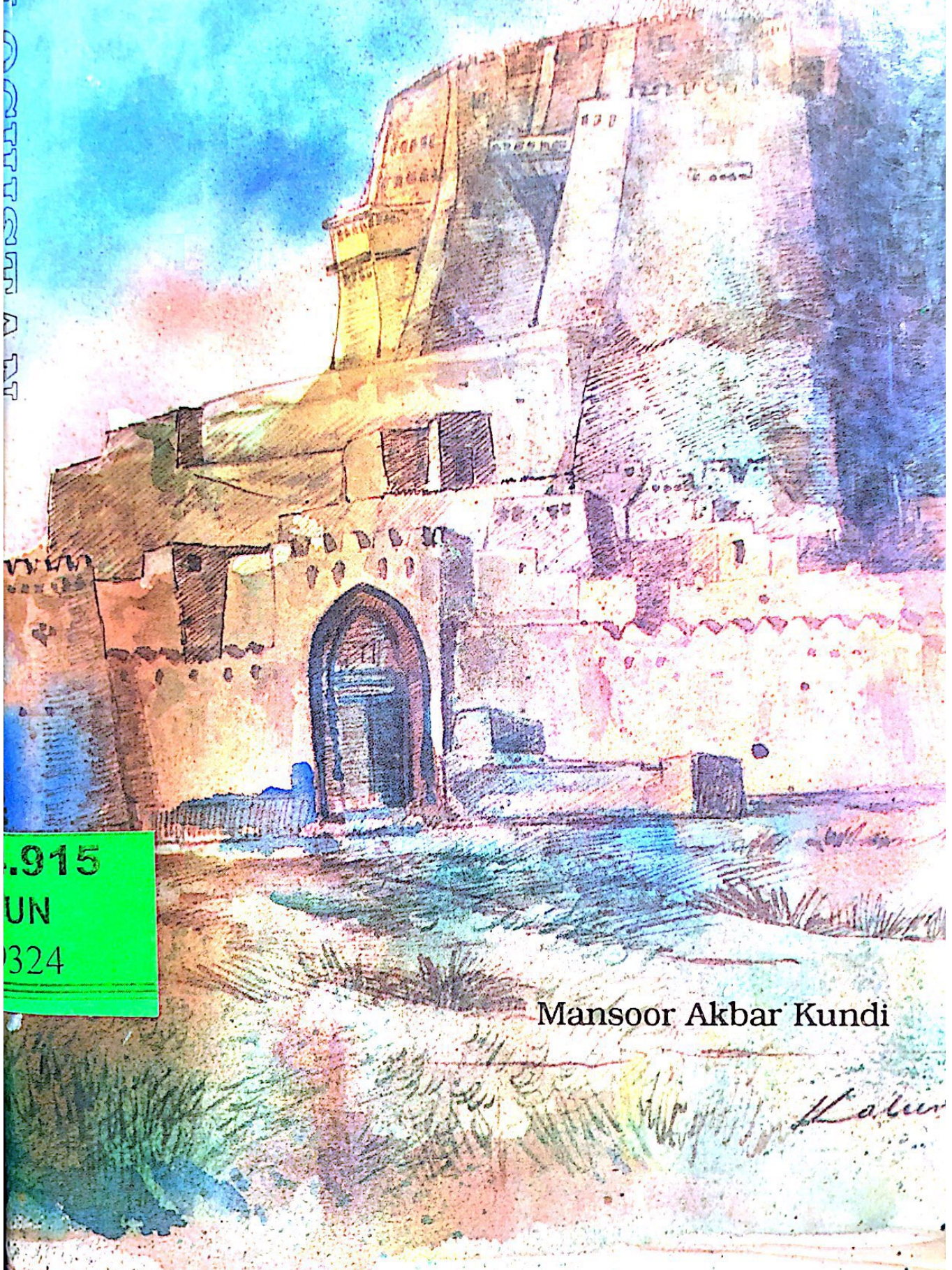


# BALUCHISTAN

*A Socio-Cultural and Political Analysis*



.915

UN

324

Mansoor Akbar Kundi

*Halim*



# BALUCHISTAN

A Socio-Cultural and Political Analysis

Mansoor Akbar Kundi



*All Rights Reserved. No part of this Book may be reproduced or translated in any form or by any means without written permission of the publisher.*



954.915  
KUN  
Baluchistan (Pak)  
Baluch (History)  
Culture—History

First Edition, 1993

Composed by:  
*Ali Computers, Quetta.*

Publisher and Printers:  
*Qasim Printers*  
*Archer Road, Quetta.*

Price Rs. [REDACTED]



## Preface

The book provides an interesting analysis/description of many socio-cultural, political, economic and administrative aspects of Balochistan about which not only the majority of readers in Pakistan, but even in Balochistan are unknown about. Balochistan like many frontline, less developed provinces/regions stands a uniqueness of cultural and ethnic pluralism. The norms of tribalism and Sardari system are entrenched in Balochistan, and mould the orientations or people towards the administrative, political and economic development in the province. Though no sufficient achievement is made towards full exploration, however, it stands a geo-strategic significance with potential resources where the interests of entire province can be raised for an improved socio-economic strata of society.

The book comprise a number of articles/features published in the leading national English dailies regarding the different issues/problems, the population and government in Balochistan is faced with. I, motivated by the desire to uncover facts relating the issues, made an extensive micro and macro level research throughout Balochistan. I traveled in different corners of Balochistan and interviewed persons from all walks of life essential to validate the writings I am greatly indebted for the help to all those who accompanied, hosted, and encouraged me eventually to complete these articles. Many of them were the ex-students of the University of Balochistan, now serving in different capacities, who afforded me a lot of respect and care during my research in different areas of Balochistan. May God Almighty help them all.

Mansoor Akbar Kundi  
Political Science Deptt  
University of Balochistan  
Quetta.  
August 1993.

## Contents

Chapter No		Page
1.	Balochistan: A Neglected Frontyard of Pakistan	1
2.	Bizenjo: His Life and Work	7
3.	Political Parties in Balochistan Past and Present	12
4.	Role of the Frontier Corps in Balochistan	18
5.	Levies: A Conventional Force In Action	23
6.	Qazi Courts in Balochistan	27
7.	Why Female Literacy is Lowest in Balochistan	30
8.	"Vulver" (The bride-price)	34
9.	Prison System in Balochistan Does it need Reformation?	37
10.	Central Jail , Mach	42
11.	October 1992 Ethnic Violence	48
12.	A Migration after Migration	52
13.	Minorities in Balochistan	57



14.	Ayodhia Incident and Hindu Minority Status in Balochistan	63
15.	Local Bodies Election 1992	68
16.	Afghan Refugees in Balochistan	73
17.	Iraqi Refugees in Quetta	77
18.	Zikris in Balochistan	83
19.	ZHOB: A Fascinating Border Town of Balochistan	87
20.	The Way of Powandas	92
21.	Jirga System in Balochistan	96
22.	PAPER: An Oasis of Literacy	101
23.	Handicrafts in Balochistan	106
24.	Vanishing Juniper Forest	111
25.	Crane Migration at Threat	115
26.	Houbara Bustard: A Step Short of Extinction	119
27.	Chakor : A Permanent Open Season	123
28.	Sandgrouse: No Bag Limit	127
29.	<i>Different Views of Balochistan Province</i>	131

## Balochistan: A Neglected Frontyard of Pakistan

Majority of persons who have visited Balochistan, the frontyard province of Pakistan, from outside the province and have travelled around, find it a land of great differences and contrasts. With all enchantment and despair, thrill and excitement, hopes and disappointments, one's expression is molded with a fact that a lot socio-cultural and political norms in Balochistan are different from the rest of the country.

Balochistan is the biggest of all provinces in Pakistan with an area 347,056 sq.kilometers., constituting 43% of the total land of Pakistan. Its area stretches from the plains of Punjab across the Suleiman range in Dera Ghazi Khan to the shores of Arabian sea in Mekran division, and desert wastes of Sanrei near Sind to the mountainous belt of Waziristan on Afghanistan/NWFP borders. Its geo-strategic importance can be gauged from the fact that it not only links all the three provinces, but two of the neighbor countries: Iran and Afghanistan through road and train linkage. The routes to Iran and Afghanistan are important international routes as they provide a road linkage to Central Asia, Middle East and Europe.

The major highways of Balochistan are such where one can hardly drive on a consecutive speed for a couple of miles without slowing down for a diversion or patch. The famous RCD, now ECO highway, linking Balochistan with Karachi, because of the huge traffic all over the year, has gone from bad to worse. The one which links Balochistan with NWFP though Dana Sher from Zhob is impassable for heavy traffic, and remained closed for all kinds of traffic in monsoon. Many parts of the province are linked through dirt roads. Similarly, the



train service, twice a week from Quetta to Taftan for Iran, is too slow to support any advance idea of travelling for many of those visiting Iran. It usually takes two to three days to cover a distance of 400 miles. It is because of poor conditions of rail tracks running through desert area of Dal Bandin and Nok Kundi. However, majority of travellers between short distance stations, according to railways department sources, make their journeys without buying their tickets. The net work of railways in Balochistan was completed by the British during 1885-95. Since then no addition is made to that and many of railways, including the famous narrow gauge railways from Quetta (Sheik Manda station) to Zhob, a major facilitation for goods transportation, have been abandoned.

Balochistan has a variety of climates, ranging from one extreme to another. The desert areas of Dast in the west of Balochistan, and flat plains of Sanrei near Sindh have an average temperature of 48 degree centigrade in summer. The areas at high altitude in Ziarat and Kalat belts have recorded a 17 degrees below zero temperature in winter. The coastal areas in Mekran and Kalat divisions are temperate zones with a mild temperature over most time of the year with more humidity in summer. In winter, many ranges of Balochistan become the habitats for huge flocks of migratory birds from Siberia. The famous migratory birds i.e. houbara bastards and sand grouse and ducks are commonly found in upper desert plains and lower terrains of Zhob, Dal Bandin, Noski and Nasir Abad.

Consequently, all varieties of fruits and nuts grow in abundance all over Balochistan, and are exported to other parts of the country. The major fruit and nut supply from Balochistan is of apple, melons, pomegranates, cherries, almonds, peanuts, and sashew nuts. In majority of cases, these orchards are sold in cash by the owners to the outside province fruit dealers, who after picking and packing all the crops, transport them to fruit markets of leading cities. This is accountable for the non-availability of seasonal fruit in Balochistan fruit markets. And if available, the rates are

expensive like of open market. According to one from Ziarat valley, known for cherry orchards, "This is sad because the area grow cherries all over but one cannot have it at cheaper price; we buy them at expensive rates".

"Balochistan is a sparsely populated province of Pakistan, however, its population has rapidly increased during the last decade. To an interest for demographers, the population growth rate in Balochistan, 8.6%, is highest in Pakistan. The population growth explosion was after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 that resulted in a large influx of Afghan refugees into Balochistan. The Afghan refugees, majority of them having carried national ID and exercised the right of votes, form a large ethnic/population division by constituting half of the population of Balochistan. The other ethnic groups are: Baloch/Brahui, Pathan, Hazara and domiciled who migrated from outside Balochistan and settled down in. The influx of Afghan refugees have mobilized major socio-economic changes by influencing business and trade transaction in Balochistan. To a sociologist, it now appears a mini-Afghanistan as to all over one can visit, can see refugees around.

Another interesting feature of Balochistan population is that it contains a considerable number of minority population. They are Christians, Hindus Sikhs, Ahemidias, and Parsees (Zoroastrians). Hindus are predominantly a business class community with shops and stores in all major cities of Balochistan.

Politically, Balochistan is different too. Balochistan is divided into political pockets with different political groups claiming their support on ethnic and political/ideological grounds. No political party in Balochistan has ever shown a majority in Assembly, a factor responsible for no-coalition free government in Balochistan under an elected rule. Even in the heyday of National Awami Party (NAP) legitimacy of public support in 1972-75, it could not form the government without the support of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI). In the 43-member



Assembly majority of members belong to upper class of society. Broadly, there are seven parties which had representation in Assembly; independent MPAs besides. The Pakhtoonkwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP), Pakistan National Party (PNP), IJI, (Muslim Leagues,) and PPP supported the government in 1990-93 with each member as a minister/adviser, speaker etc. The number of cabinet members per Assembly wise was highest in Pakistan. The Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP), Balochistan National Movement (BNM) and JUI(F) were in opposition. The PDA/PPP, despite the PPP-IJI opposition all over, supported the government and were goody goody with. When asked from a PDA minister why the party supported a IJI coalition when there were staunch differences between the two at centre. The answer was that the party in Balochistan believed in securing its own interests. "The problems of Balochistan are different. Its politics is different, so we have to adapt a policy different from overall party policies" said the minister. The four of the JWP MPAs had joined the government, two under Jamali, and two under Magsi, in defiance to party's command, but glued to party membership, a floor crossing in disguise. It was no horse trading but the promotion of party and individual interests.

Balochistan was raised to a full-fledged province status in 1970. Since then major administrative developments have taken place. At present, Balochistan is divided into six administrative divisions: Quetta, Sibi, Nasirabad, Kalat, Zhob and Mekran. There are total 22 districts/agencies. Many of districts were raised during last few years.

The administrative peculiarities in Balochistan are different from other provinces and may be enchanting for many. From law and order point of view, it is divided into "A" and "B" areas. An "A" area is where police rule can apply, while in "B" area no police rule applies, and remains under Levies' control. Levy is a traditional force being recruited on tribal basis without any advancement and training in law enforcement. Any body committing crime in "A" area if runs

away to "B" area. He is out of police arrest, he can only be apprehended by Levy men. The "A" area extends to major cities and capital area. The 85% area in Balochistan is "B" area without police rule, though a regular police under a full-fledged Inspector-General office exists for law and order situation in province. According to a District Magistrate, the B area provides more asylum to law-breakers. Majority of outlaws and stolen vehicles from other parts of the country find refuge in the "B" area of Balochistan. Because of the lack of Levy force as an effective law enforcement agency in maintaining law and order in B areas, the district/agency administration is left with only choice of asking the services of the Frontier Corps (FC) in most of law and order cases, a factor responsible for the controversial role of FC in Balochistan.

The prison structure in Balochistan appears different from the rest of the country. To many sociologists, it is rootening otherwise. The only jail with execution/ gallows facilities and where a technical workshop exists for the reformation of inmates to learn technical skills, i.e. carpentry, tailoring, and carpet-making, weaving and iron-works, is Mach jail. The remaining ten prisons are district jails, some of them too small in size to enable an inmate for regular walk of two hundred yards, without requirements of rehabilitation.

Balochistan is the province of Pakistan where Qazi courts exist. This to an outsider may mark the uniqueness of a judicial set-up where judges adjudicate all cases coming under their jurisdiction on basis of Shariah (Islamic jurisprudence), as it requires, but their role is restricted. They are curtailed of all jurisdiction other than civil. They can decide only those civil cases not exceeding Rs. 50,000 and do involve government as a party or criminality. In a situation where Qazi courts exercise their jurisdictions and a government party is found involved in a case, directly or indirectly, the Qazi courts are not empowered to institute or interrupt the proceedings. All decisions are Qazi courts are challengeable by Balochistan High Court. Out of the total 17 Qazi courts in Balochistan,



more than half number of Qazis are without any proper legal/fiqah education and cannot follow English.

The province of Balochistan is a land of great contrasts where one can experience a lot of socio-cultural and political difference from other parts of the country. The more one travels inside Balochistan, the more difference of lifestyle and administration, he can see.

## Chapter 2

### Bizenjo: His Life and Work

Ghaous Bahksh Bizenjo known as "Baba-e-Balochistan" (father of Balochistan) was a true leader whose political legacy seems to have left deep imprints on the people of Balochistan, including even those whose support he once failed to enjoy. He was born in 1917 at Nal, in the Kuzdar district of Balochistan. His father Saffar Khan was a notable of the area. He belonged to the Hamalani branch of Bizenjo tribe.

He received his early education from a Mission school in Quetta, but soon after the disastrous earthquake of 1935 bringing enormous destruction to Quetta and its surroundings, he left the town as his family shifted to Karachi. In Karachi, he completed his schooling at Sind Madrasa having received a distinction both in studies and soccer. Being a sportsman, he showed brilliant performance not only in his school foot-ball team, but for private clubs. After he proceeded to Aligarh Muslim University, the young Bizenjo remained on the University first-eleven soccer team as skipper. He continued his studies from 1935 to 38 at Aligarh. During his studies at Aligarh where knowing of politics was the common norms for many stalwarts, the young Bizenjo got acquainted with much of Indian politics, particularly its nationalist appearance, leaving longer lasting engravements upon him, as he described often, in his political struggle later. There he came across many eminent Indian leaders and scholars, and frequently discussed with them the problems of sub-continent. Bizenjo seemed to have inclined towards politics from his youth days. The early political impressions upon him were made by Mir Abdul Aziz Kurd and Faiz Mohammad Shawani, pioneers of the Baloch Union Party. Having been formed in 1928, it was probably the first political association established on ethnic



lines.

The Baloch Union Party was designed to promote the political and reflected a motivation by like-minded persons to raise social consciousness amongst Baloch people for future development. Though many believe that the party remained less successful in fulfilling its mission, nonetheless, it contributed to forming of a Baloch cadre for the same purpose. Many of its members, later on, actively participated in the politics of Balochistan. Forming of the Baloch League and Kalat National Party, few years later, were the ultimate result of that. The party sponsored many activities/meetings where hundreds were mobilized to show their support for the cause of political and social participation in Balochistan. In 1937, an All Indian Baloch Conference, the larger credit for which organizing it went to Yousif Ali Khan, a Baloch political activist and reformer, was held in Jacobabad. The conference was believed to have been attended by huge number of people from Balochistan, and Sind. Less or more, various gatherings and avenues were moved eventually to highlight their aims to raise a conscious amongst those who still needed a maturity of thought and action for any participation in politics.

Bizenjo, after his return from Aligarh, actively participated in Baloch League, a forum for political alike Balochs. Recalling the beginning of his participation in politics, in one of the interviews, he boastfully claimed that he commenced his political journey from the platform of Baloch League in Karachi. He soon appeared as one of its principal members. After the Kalat National Party (KNP) was formed, which opening session he attended as a special delegate of the Baloch League, his active participation in politics drifted from Karachi to Balochistan. His affinity to the KNP was of a leading member who overshadowed its politics. The KNP was a regional party having been affiliated with All Indian States Peoples' Conference; and was mostly rooted in Northern Balochistan. The Party was

banned in 1939 by the British government. Many years after another party was formed by the followers of Kalat National Party, among whom Bizenjo was eminent, named "Isthaman Gal" (People's Party/alliance).

In the wake of differences with the newly established government of Pakistan and Baloch leaders over the future existence of Kalat and other native states of Balochistan where the leaders of Kalat National Party launched active opposition against the centralization of whole incorporated areas/states into Pakistan, Kalat National Party was banned. Many of its leaders, including Aga Karim Khan, Gul Nasir Khan and Bizenjo were jailed. In Bizenjo's words "We were not against any inclusion of Balochistan and its states, which even during the British period had enjoyed autonomy, but we believed in defending our rights and ensuring development in our areas." To him, the Pakistani leaders were apathetic to our identity and problems, and believed in the forcible solution at all odds. That led to Jalawan resistance and other opposition to the central government. Bizenjo whose political maturation had promised him a future in the politics of Balochistan, remained a fore-runner of the Isthaman Gal until it was merged into National Awami Party (NAP) in 1956. The NAP provided him a broader platform to distinguish his political role not only in Balochistan, but in other parts of the country. Having been elected previously to central legislature from Balochistan, he was voted in 1970 election for the National Assembly. He was appointed the Governor of Balochistan under the Ata Ullah Mengal Ministry (NAP-JUI alliance), the office he assumed until February 1973 after it was dissolved by the prime minister, Bhutto. He bitterly opposed the dissolving of Balochistan Assembly and described the action as unconstitutional and undemocratic which consequences would harm the process of political participation in Pakistan.

He like many other NAP leaders suffered the wrath



of Bhutto's government after having been accused of anti-state activities. Along with many leaders of defunct NAP, he too was jailed where he remained until the end of 1977. Despite his opposition to Bhutto, he condemned the military action in 1977 as unnecessary and dictatorial. In 1979, he initiated the founding of Pakistan National Party whose leadership was under his direct influence. He remained vocal for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan and provincial autonomy for Balochistan. He contested election for the National Assembly in 1988, but to the dismay of its many sympathizers, lost by a narrow margin. The chances of his winning, however, were crumpled by his ailing health which had made his campaign activities very ineffective. He died after a prolonged illness in 1989.

Bizenjo's political life seems to have represented a true democratic valour. He, other than the fact was one of the important political elites of Balochistan, was after all the first leader from Baloch belt whose rise to political eminence were other than the benefits of being a Nawab or Sardar. His participation and political persuasion provided a sense of familiarity and existence to many Nawabs/Sardars from Baloch belt in politics though, yet the achieving of prominence was mainly due to his common existence amongst people whose support, he believed, was an essential requisite for a popular leadership. "No true leadership" he once said, "can exist without securing a popular support."

He was a staunch supporter of democracy in Pakistan with a maximum representation of province's rights. He favoured a democratic order free of theocracy. The process of democracy in a country is restricted under the dominance of a religious fanaticism, and makes the political development in limbo where a progress of public participation and freedom of political action is impossible. Subsequently, he described, that the predominant role of army and bureaucracy into state politics poses a threat to

democracy. He believed that the role of bureaucracy is important in any developed or developing country, nevertheless, once it assumes the role of important political decision-making agency, its existence appears at cost of democratic processes. He was assured that mobilization of people in politics and strengthening of political order in Pakistan, where free participation of people is possible, can genuinely restrict the role of growing mobilization of bureaucracy and army in national politics. He opposed the growing military role in Pakistani politics. Explaining the PNP joining of the MRD in 1983, he said "MRD was initially staged against the Zia regime. We are against the very role of army in country's politics."

Bizenjo was a genial soul and a true politician who believed in open-heart politics with a true spirit of promoting the interests of common man which could only be possible, by raising a socio-economic and political consciousness among them. He left no stone unturned in raising the political, educational and social consciousness of Balochistan people. His contribution towards his people are immense.



### Chapter 3 Political Parties in Balochistan: Past and Present

Balochistan, the largest of all provinces of Pakistan but sparsely populated, has a political culture where attitudes, orientations and behaviour of people towards government stand differences from other parts. Most of Balochistan is a tribal society with different ethnic groups, each struggling to safeguard its interests against others. The lowest ratio of education (11% compared to overall national rate of 26%) lack of development in important sectors, and an entrenched tribal system where Sardars' legitimacy is still unchallengable, all thwart the process of modernization in the province. The role of political parties, nonetheless, since the emergence of each on the political scene, cannot be ignored in raising the political conscious of masses towards politicalization and development.

The oldest political party in Balochistan was Baloch Union Party (BUP) founded in 1928 by Mir Aziz Kurd and Faiz Mohammad Shawani. It was the first political group founded on ethnic ground to defend the rights of Baloch people. A fact, nonetheless, remains that a branch of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind had also existed in Balochistan where few fundamentalists from Baloch and Pathan areas, supported its activities. Later on, another political parties was formed. It was Kalat Nationalist Party (KNP). The KNP and Jamiat Hind both leant towards the Indian struggle for independence against the British, and supported All India Congress Party. According to the British gazetteers about Balochistan, they both were active in giving voice to the Congress participation in Balochistan (during 1938-45). Many of the party workers were arrested and imprisoned to longer sentences.

After the partition, 1952, two new political groups emerged in Balochistan, respectively in Baloch/Brahui and

Pathan belts. In Baloch area, "Astaman Gal", founded by Shazada Karim of Kalat, became the sole runner for Balochs' rights and demanded them in all national aspects of development from centre. Similarly, in Pathan belt, Samad Khan Ajakzai, formed its own political group: "Wror Pushtoon" (Pathan Brothers) to secure the rights of Pathan areas. The support for both parties was ethnic based. The challenge to both, however, particularly in Pathan belt, was posed by the Muslim League and fundamentalists who blamed the parties for narrowing the ethnic interests against each other. The JUI which was established by the participants of the Jamiat Hind enjoyed support speaking areas. The JUI, nonetheless, shared differences with Muslim League and were active in opposing its leadership in Balochistan.

In 1955, after the one-unit, the both parties merged into the National Awami Party (NAP) to safeguard their interests. The NAP platform suited both as the NAP policies against center e.i. the opposition to one-unit and safeguard of small nationalities' interests coincided with theirs. From 1955 to 1975, the NAP remained the strongest and united political group in Balochistan where more consensus was found among its leaders. In 1970, the NAP became the leading seats, winner in the Balochistan Assembly. It won 8 out of the 20 seats. The Pakistan Muslim League won 3, while 2 seats were won by the JUI. The independents won 5.

The 1977 elections did not involve much importance for the regional political parties as all merged into NAP were debarred from elections and majority of their leaders were in Hyderabad prison awaiting charges of conspiracy by the Bhutto government. After the martial, majority of its leaders were released, but political activities remained suspended. The major political emergence during 1979-85 were the establishment of Pakistan National Party (PNP) by late Ghaus Bax Bizenjo and Pakhtoonkwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) by Mahmood Khan Achakzai, the son of late Samad Khan Achakzai. The PMAP fetched more support from those Pustu



speaking people who had supported NAP. The parties' activities during the period were rather underground. The Baloch Students' Organization (BSO) during the period remained very active in its cause for more rights for Baloch people. However, no reconciliation was offered by the Zia regime, even the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), to challenge its legitimacy.

After a long period of the suspension of parties based activities, the 1988 elections, provided the political parties a broad chance to show their voting strength in Balochistan. By then, changes had occurred in voting behaviour and parties list. The Balochistan National Movement (BNM) supported by the BSO and Watan Party had gained some popularity in Baloch area. Similarly, the PDA / People's Party and Islami-Jamooahri Ittehad (IJI) were active for election bids. The Peoples' Party, compared to past had gained popularity, but the IJI was more stronger. The IJI whole support came from Muslim League veterans. The Watan Party (WP) survived and even won one seat in the Balochistan Assembly. The WP had supported the Balochistan National Alliance (BNA) under Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti as Chief Minister. The BNM had supported the BNA alliance. The PMAP won one seat and so the ANP. The JUI won 11 and was the leading seats winner party in Balochistan. It was followed by the IJI with 10 seats. The Independents were 11 including the three minority candidates; the BNA had 7, and the PNP only 3 seats in Assembly.

The 1990 elections was a watershed in the party politics in Balochistan. The major change was the establishing of the Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) founded by the Nawab Bugti. The party was the brain-child of Nawab whose strong stature provided it immediate boost of membership and party campaigns. Many who joined the party were those who could exercise an independent status of winning the elections or enjoyed a social status needed to support party stunt. It won 12 seats and was the leading seats carrier in Provincial

Assembly. The JUI which had enjoyed voters' support in 1988, failed to win more than 6 seats. The PNA won 5 and missed two constituencies by a narrow margin. The BNM was reduced to 2 though an expectation was that it would secure more. The major factor accountable for the BNM loss of seats was the JWP. Majority of seats where the BNM held voters support, the JWP was active. Also, many of popular members that accounted for the BNM had joined the JWP under the Nawab's influence.

The PMAP was more successful party campaign for mobilizing voters' support in Pustu speaking constituencies. It won 3 seats and could win equally more if ANP had not opposed it in many constituencies. The ANP which did not secure any seat, nonetheless had inflicted damage on the PMAP by cutting voters' support in many Pustu speaking constituencies against the JUI, Muslim Leaguers and the Independents. The ANP-PMAP alliance in Balochistan is believed to promote the interests of the PMAP in large.

The IJI had 7 seats, and was supported by four Independents whom ministries were assured by the Nawab Sharif government under the Jamali coalition. The PDA won 3 seats. The PDA appeared more supported by voters in urban cities. Two of its candidates were believed to have been deprived of victories by rigging the elections.

The party politics in Balochistan involves ethnic and ideological base support. Except the JUI, the IJI and PDA, the rest major support comes on ethnic lines. The IJI has been supported by the Muslim League veterans, whose strength though has reduced, belong to wealthy enjoying social status in society. The Muslim League leaders in Balochistan have shown full support for the government during all governments/regimes, a factor responsible for their participation in government even under the non-democratic governments. The JUI holds support in Pathan areas, however, it has gained strength in Baloch areas where now more support is shown for the JUI.



Those parties, i.e., BNM, PNP, PMAP and the JWP have ethnic based constituencies. Though the PNP and JWP have defied the narrowing of their party programmes only to ethnic issues, but a fact remains that they have failed to win voters' support in Pathan areas. In Balochistan, the ethnic issue has undermined the party programmes and is mainly responsible for the party division. The major ethnic groups: Baloch/Brahui and Pathan have ethnic consideration while voting in elections for party candidates. The settlers and Hazaras (migrated from Afghanistan and are settled down in Quetta) have voted for PDA, JUI and their own candidates. They are less inclined to vote for regional parties. In Balochistan, the Afghan refugees, migrating to Balochistan after the 1978 Saur revolution in Afghan, also stand voting strength as majority of them now carry national I.D. and run business in different cities. They provide more support to the fundamentalists than others, a factor accountable for the JUI successes in many constituencies in national/provincial and Local bodies elections in Baloch and Pathan areas.

The party division on ethnic lines has not only divided the public opinion but leads to ethnic rivalry which had been resulting ethnic riots undermining the process of development in the province as occurred over the construction of Agricultural college with the EEC Asian fund. The fund for the construction of college was withheld and rather allotted to Sri Lanka. Next, it has failed to produce a leader that can recognize his leadership in large. Any charismatic leader from Baloch area may not be acceptable to Pushtu speaking people and vice versa; the acceptance of a unanimous leadership is impossible. Similarly, those parties which claim their existence other than ethnic lines find not full support from public already under an ethnic division. This is mainly responsible for a multi-party system where no government is a coalition free.

The political parties in Balochistan, despite all their divisions and differences, have played an important role in the

promotion of political conscious among masses and moved to development.

## Chapter 4

### Role of the Frontier Corps in Balochistan

The Frontier Corps (FC)'s role in Balochistan is marked with great controversy under a political setup. There is always a tug of war going between the political leaders/MPAs and center over the excesses of FC interferences in Balochistan, particularly in border areas adjoining Iran and Afghanistan. It was particular during the Nawab Bugti chief ministership, though the public hue and cry against its role was common during the Jamali government.

The FC, falling under the direct control of the Central Ministry of Interior, is an active semi-military force established during the British period to provide a military support to district administration in frontier regions against any tribe insurgency. With the expansion of the Forward Policy by the British, requiring a stronger militia force to exercise control over tribal buffer areas, FC emerged more as an organized and entrenched force. After the creation of Pakistan, FC became an important border force in two of the province: NWFP and Balochistan. The FC in Balochistan, however, was smaller in size limiting to only three corps: Zhob Militia, Chagi Militia and Mehran Rifles commanded by the NWFP Inspector General. Later on, in the wake of growing necessity of border militia in Balochistan the strength of the FC was increased and many new corps were raised in different parts of Balochistan. In 1968, a full-fledged FC Inspector General office was established. The FC performs three major functions.

1. To provide security around borders, and prevent all illegal movements across and inside.
2. Control smuggling activities; inside the twenty miles border radius for items other than arms and drugs. In case of arms

and drugs, it can raid and seize wherever it finds them;  
3. Afford military support to civil administration in case of worsening law and order situation in the area.

At present, the Balochistan FC has eleven corps with an approximate strength of 3500 to 4000 each. They are equipped with modern light weapons; some of the corps have mounting armours and field batteries. Here is a brief description of various sub-division of FC and their positions.

#### Name of Corps Stationed at

1. Zhob Militia	Zhob
2. Pishin Scouts	Chaman
3. Ghazaband Scouts	Balili near Quetta
4. Bamboor Rifles	Dera Bugti
5. Sibi Scouts	Sibi
6. Mekran Scouts	Mekran
7. Loralai Scouts	Loralai
8. Chagi Militia	Noshki
9. Mawand Refiles	Kohlu
10. Kharan Rifles	Neokundi
11. Kalat Scouts	Khuzdar

Despite the fact the FC is to prosecute an important function; essential to the maintenance of law and order situation in the province, yet for the last many years, particularly after the inception of the civilian government, there is a found public resentment against the FC activities which tend to mount pressure on the provincial government against the center. The major resentment comes from the border areas where the force is actively engaged in border supervision and anti-smuggling duties. Six of the corps: Zhob Militia, Kharan Rifles, Kalat Scouts and Mehran Scouts are border corps stationed closer to the borders of Iran and Afghanistan. They perform, primarily, two functions of patrolling borders and seizing smuggled



goods within twenty miles area from the border in case they are other than drugs and arms. The FC jurisdiction of raiding for seizures of drugs and arms is extended to all areas including living areas. The largest portion of smuggling across borders in Balochistan is through the mountain ranges and desert routes, where FC is believed to be the only effective force.

The complaints about FC anti-smuggling behaviors, often expressed by people's representatives, are made on the ground that FC is too aberrant in compliance with its duties. They blame that FC does not follow the twenty miles radius rule and makes seizure on both goods and vehicles, even they are out of threat limit and contain neither drugs nor arms. Another complaint is that they do it even in living areas and impound vehicles too.

Nearly all leading political parties in Balochistan, especially Jamooohri Watan Party (JWP), Pakhtoonkwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP), Balochistan National Movement (BNM), and Pakistan National Party (PNP) occupying important positions in Jamali's cabinet were very critical of the FC role. They accused FC of being unnecessarily strict and interfering with majority of those who find smuggling of non-drugs/arms items only source of their livelihood. They claim that in the absence of development to agricultural land, public offices and farming, majority of the border area people should not be deprived of this source of income, as they have no other alternative. Again, over the law and order situation in the province, public leaders blame FC for militant behavior against the local populace. As a matter of fact FC's involvement in law and order situation has grown in recent times, as it is the only effective existing force in the eh provide for disciplining and protecting law and order at a time when no other law-enforcing agencies can do it. Balochistan does not have an entrenched police system. Majority of the areas in Balochistan are "B" class areas

where no police exist. The only available local force: Levies is a traditional force and it too small and ill-equipped to cope with a major law and order situation arising often out of tribal feuds or ethno-political rivalries.

In such eventualities the local administration's only choice is FC. In such cases a first class Magistrate accompanies the operation party and reports the happenings to the District Magistrate/Political Agents. The FC also performs the role of protecting important installation throughout the province where no other force exists. For instance, the role of Bamboor Rifles at Dera Bugti, other than supporting the district administration in controlling law and order situation in general, is primarily to protect the Gas supply line to other parts of country from Sui where a threat to it always appears from tribes. The FC's role in Balochistan seems a hard nut to crack in the Center-Province dialogue. On the one hand, FC exercises an function of law and order and border security in peace and crisis. The role of FC is necessitated in the situation where law and order control over border areas is essential to restrict the inflow of arms and drugs into settled areas. The major supply of arms and drugs is possible if borders are not sealed.

On the other hand, a chain of criticism against its growing unnecessary interference in local affairs comes under attack by many political circles in Balochistan. Criticism against the FC is not always justified. Often it becomes a scapegoat for political discontent among politicians. Leaders from the areas, where FC has become more operative, find a shrewd thrust to fall in line with public grievances against the FC in order to win public support. Also, they come under pressure finding it an exerting demand to do so. This is more common in case o MPAs or those in the coalition government. They find it a growing demand by their party men or local notables to raise their dissatisfaction against the FC on the Assembly's

floor in other high forums.

## Levies: A Conventional Force in Action

The Levies are a conventional force, mobilised in Balochistan as an important corps in maintaining law and order situation all over the province. In the province of Balochistan, the largest part of which comprises B areas without police rule, the role of Levies is very important. The Levy force was raised during the British rule in India. On the one hand, the British needed strong border militias to support their forward policy, and on the other, it was considered necessary that a recruited detachment be raised at local levels to counter any individual or collective threat to law and order situation in district/agency areas. Unlike regular militias, the Levies were strictly recruited on tribal lines. The enlistment of Levies on these lines served many purposes. First, it comprised local people who belonged to different tribes who were familiar with the conduct and whereabouts of those causing disturbances. Second, being recruited on tribal bases, most of the Levy men came from respectable families whom usually the notables of the areas recommended for enlistment. They could mobilise family support in chasing/arresting law breakers. Third, the area civil administration, through drafting of eminent tribesmen's sons/son-in-laws as it was possible in those days, could win their families' support in strengthening its imperialist rule. Allowances and privileges were fixed for those in Levies other than the bonuses they received for excellent performance of their job. After independence, no significant changes were made to restructure the Levy force and they remained a status quo local force without coming under an entrenched system of provincial/central level command. Falling under the Home department, they remained under the direct command of a district/agency administration.



Administratively, Balochistan is divided into two major parts: "A" and "B" areas. The "A" area is where regular/reserve police force exists. The "B" area is where police force does not exist and all major law and order situations are supposedly dealt with by the Levies. In Balochistan more than 75 percent area is "B" area. In many cases, the "A" area is limited to major cities and surroundings. For example, in Zhob district, the Zhob city is in "A" area with regular police force, but half a mile away begins the "B" area, a factor responsible for weaker role of police force in Balochistan as compared to other provinces.

Every district/agency in Balochistan has its own Levies, falling under the independent command of district magistrate/political agent, and is named after the particular district. For example, Kohlu Levies, Kalat Levies, Queta Levies, Zhob Levies etc. The allowances and salaries, more or less, for all ranks are same all over the province. The salaries are paid through respective district funds. Similarly, the supply of arms and ammunition to Levies is made through district armoury, though demands for new weapons are made to the home department. They are mostly armed with conventional rifles.

The Levies force ranks are divided into five classes: sepoy, hawaldar, dafedar, jameedar, and risaldar. Some districts with larger Levy force have the rank of risaldar-major. He is in grade eleven below the rank of a tehsildar.

The role of Levies in maintaining law and order in "B" areas where they exist, is still very important," said a district magistrate. "However, its performance has become less effective than in past." The major factor behind this, according to him, is that no structural and organisational changes have occurred to curb growing lawlessness in many sensitive areas. They lack proper training and advanced weapons and communications to tackle any sensitive situation. That is why the district administration is left with no choice but to request for the services of the Frontier Corps

(FC), a factor responsible for the controversial role of the FC in Balochistan. The FC, a paramilitary force under the ministry of interior, is a strong force in controlling law and order situation and anti-state/smuggling activities in the province.

The Levies are recruited on tribal lines in a district where every tribe receives a fixed number of seats, or more if obliged by the administration for certain reasons. It is common in a situation where one tribe having larger say in government affairs or politically stronger, may try to get more than its quota of seats in Levies by obliging or pressurizing the government. No person, nevertheless, is eligible for appointment in Levies without belonging to a tribe of the area. In the words of a retired Levy risaldar, "Levies are composed of official tribe force. They are uneducated and without training. Also, there is an inherited right of recruitment. In case of a Levy man's retirement or demise, the right of recruitment devolves to his sons or closed relatives." To him, proxies in Levy recruitment is committed. Even people from not any tribe are recruited in Levies on behalf of chieftains.

The recruitment policy, according to a common belief, has undergone deterioration which has undermined the performance of Levies as a law enforcement agency. In the past tribesmen were drafted on merit, but now it involves favours and obligation. According to an official report, most of the Levies recruited recently have been selected on political basis. Even those recruited on merit, according to a risaldar-major from Kalat Levies, lack total fitness for Levies. "There are many precedents, where in defiance of Levies rule, people from outside area are drafted in through approaches. Anybody with some education will go to other jobs than joining Levies, even those without education prefer joining other professions." Previously, particularly during the British rule, this was considered an honourable profession, but is not the case now. Now only those who are unable to find a suitable job elsewhere or those unable to find any other job, join this force. He wished that the Levy forces were either

disbanded or restructured on the pattern of the police force, then "B" areas are turned into "A" areas so that Levies are gradually replaced. Some areas in Balochistan are turned into "A" areas but because of resistance from tribal heads and tribes, the government is not very effective in turning enough area into "B" area.

In Balochistan, Levies still remain an active law enforcing agency though their performance is not much impressive in view of growing law and order situation. Times have changed with advancement in the field of communication and weapons system, but the Levies have not changed at all. This makes their role less effective in maintaining law and order.

## Qazi Courts in Balochistan:

The functioning of the Qazi courts in Balochistan, the only province in Pakistan where these courts exist, may mark the uniqueness of a judicial set-up where judges adjudicate all cases coming under their jurisdiction on the basis of Shariah (Islamic jurisprudence) and the civil code of laws. However, if analyzed under in the context of jurisdiction it exercises, the system appears less successful as a sound mechanism of justice. Handicapped by many factors, the Qazi courts, give the image of a rather weak institution of justice.

The Qazi system, known as Dastur Amal (Diwani), Kalat 1952, inherited portions of the Qazi judicial system that had been functioning as system and full-fledged judicial order in the former Kalat state that consisted of more than three-fourth of the present Balochistan. After the British occupation of Balochistan which divided it into two parts, the British and the native Balochistan, major changes took place in the judicial system which distorted the jurisdiction of the Qazi courts. They, however, continued functioning in native Balochistan as an independent institution of judiciary, though their role became less effective. In 1952, their jurisdictions were extended to the areas previously included in the British Balochistan, by setting up separate Qazi courts. The Dastur Amal (Diwani), 1952, primarily concerned with the civil jurisdiction, is believed to have contained a portion of evidence (Qanun Shahadit) and criminal act (Qanun Faujdari); Qazis were empowered to decide in these cases. However, in 1977, they were curtailed of all jurisdiction other than civil. According to the Dastur Amal Diwani 1952, the Qazis can decide only civil cases not exceeding Rs. 50,000. Also, they are not empowered to adjudicate cases that involve government as a party. In a situation where Qazi courts exercise their jurisdictions and a government party is found in



involved in a case, directly or indirectly, the Qazi courts are not empowered to institute or interrupt the proceedings. In the case proceedings will take place in a civil or magistrate court.

According to one other lawyers well acquainted with the Qazi courts set-up, "many important civil suits are dismissed from the proceedings in the Qazi courts on the ground that a government party is involved. Judgments on the cases before the Qazi courts are based on a mixed Shariah and civil law, rather more civil laws." A Qazi court does not have the powers to penalize, except awarding a six month imprisonment in case of the contempt of court, but "exercising such a power is not very often" said a Qazi. And might be challenged in Majlis Shura or High Court."

Cases before these Qazi courts are either referred by the existing lower courts, i.e. civil and magistrate courts or directly by the party involved. Earlier, cases were referred to the Qazi courts by the sub-divisional magistrates or even Tehsildars. Later on, through an amendment by the Balochistan High Court, the channeling of cases to the Qazi courts through the administration was taken away.

Every Qazi court is presided over by a Qazi. The qualification of a Qazi is not defined. Traditionally, any one having a "Madrassa" qualification could be appointed a Qazi, and many of the present Qazis in Balochistan are simply "Madrassa" educated. Steps, however, have been taken during the last few years by the Balochistan Public Service Commission to regularize and streamline the appointment of the Qazis. The selection team, consisting of the chairman of the commission and two justices from the Balochistan High Court, gives preferences to the law graduates with a Master's in Islamiat.

There were growing complains by the parties involved or those who appealed to the superior courts that Qazi was unable to interpret because of the lack of understanding of the civil codes. The lack of the necessary knowledge of English was another problem. According to

one lawyer in Zhob district, "on many occasions when I visited the Qazi court regarding the cases of my clients, the Qazi asked me to translate the version into Pusthu or Urdu." At present, the Qazis selected through the public service commission hold law and master's degrees as availability of such persons is not problem. A Qazi, being appointed in BPS-17 like other regular members of judiciary in his rank, enjoys many service benefits.

Appeals against a Qazi court decision is made in the Majlis Shura, consisting of a district and session judge and two senior Qazis. Every administrative division of Balochistan where Qazi courts function, has one Majlis Shura, serving as the immediate court of appeals against the Qazi court decisions. The Majlis Shura's head office is in Quetta. There are a total of 17 Qazi courts in Balochistan. Appeals against the decisions of Majlis Shura are filed in the High Court, the final court of appeal against the Qazi administration. The High Court, the final court of appeal against the Qazi administration. The High Court, actively exercising its powers of revision, can reverse any decision/action of Qazi court/Majlis Shura. It can take a disciplinary action against a Qazi's abuse of power, and is authorized to remove him from office. Last year, a Qazi of Dera Bugti was dismissed from office by the Balochistan High Court of abusing his power.

The functioning of Qazi courts in Balochistan has undergone many changes since the British rule. The restructuring of these courts in 1952 has not fully restored the judicial authority of these courts thereby restricting their effectiveness as well as their judicial role. They need more effective jurisdiction.



## Chapter 7

### Why Female Literacy is Lowest in Balochistan

The low female literacy rate in Pakistan strikes Balochistan in particular where the ratio of female literacy is disappointingly low. Balochistan which is the largest province of Pakistan, constituting 43% of the total area of the country, is, nonetheless, sparsely populated. The Balochistan population, according to the 1981 census, is 4,390,900 out of the total 84,253,644 persons. The population of Balochistan, nevertheless, has considerably increased during the last decade because of a huge influx of Afghan refugees. The growth rate in Balochistan, however, according to the 1981 census report, was highest with 7.1 growth rate during 1972-81. The females constituting 48.2% of the total population in Balochistan has got the lowest female literacy rate in Pakistan. The literacy rate in Balochistan is 11% compared to the overall national rate of literacy -26.2%. The female ratio of literacy in Balochistan is hardly 2.4%, and even majority of those belong to the urban areas. In rural areas the female percentage of literacy is below 1%. The current literacy rate in Balochistan, as the latest US Aid Education Research report in Balochistan shows, is below the recognized standard of literacy in many of the Third World Countries.

Two factors are mainly responsible for the lowest level of female education in Balochistan. The socio-cultural conditions under a strong tribal/rural structure, and insufficient schooling arrangements for female, particularly in rural areas.

Balochistan has got a vast rural area with an entrenched tribal set-up where, according to the Pakistan Planning Commission report of 1988, 84.39% of the population of province live. The socio-cultural values in Balochistan's entrenched tribal system are such where the idea

of female education receives less encouragement. The rural society in Balochistan is a conservative society where still female education lacks common support. Female education is not encouraged in large by parents/guardians because of the existing social values against. According to an extensive research conducted by the Social Work Department of the University of Balochistan, socio-cultural factors are major impediment in female education. The rural society, necessarily, a male-dominated society where female education is perceived a move for modernization of women that contributes to undermine the strict control over women on which not only the male honor but whole social order depends. They believe that a women is better designed in house with a born quality of being house-wife. She may receive early "Maktab" (religious education) or primary schooling in some cases, and then confines to house-life.

Similarly, the custom of early marriages in tribal area; it is common all over in rural areas of Balochistan, which in majority cases are arranged and Vulver (bride-price) made, make the parents disinterested in educating them. They are rather supportive of their household duties. Many parents interviewed over the question of educating their daughters, replied in good faith, "We want their betterment, thus arrange them early marriages. The skills of running a house pay them more in husband's house than modern education. The study also endorsed the fact that a larger section of parents in those areas were illiterate without any awareness of the benefits of education for females. Many of them below the average income assumed the education of their daughters a financial burden on family. The lack of schooling facilities/arrangements for girls is another major factor that has contributed to the discouragement of female education in Balochistan, particularly in rural areas, in Balochistan. The number of primary schools for girls in Balochistan is very low.

According to Government of Balochistan, Bureau of Statistics Report and Directorate of Primary Education

statistics 1989-90, the total population of Balochistan between the school going age of 5-8 year was 860,320: male 419354 and female 440966. The number of Primary Schools was 3,106 for male and 553 for female. The number of Middle Schools for girls, where primary education could be possible and was essential to raise the female ratio of literacy, was 95 to 319 for boys. The male enrollment in that age group was 410,354 for male, and 34048 for female. The number of female teachers in schools for that age group was 2,617 to 13,044 male teachers.

The situation is of more concern in rural areas where schooling arrangements are inadequate, in the sense that not enough female teaching staff is available. Many primary girls schools are run by a single or a couple of teachers. Many of the teaching staff appointed either remain on leave or refused to go to the areas. "The shortage of female schools where no sufficient education takes place is one of the factors for growing number of drop out students from these schools," said a female education officer. To her, the ratio of the drop out amongst female students is much higher compared to male students. "It is 93% in rural areas to 45% in urban areas". Female teachers are reluctant to serve in rural areas because of two major reasons. First, no sufficient communication exists in the far-flung zones of Balochistan and teachers, majority of them coming from urban areas, feel sense of insecurity. Second, not sufficient accommodation and facilities are available to make them encouraged to serve in those areas. Therefore, majority of qualified teachers prefer serving in urban to rural towns.

The female education in Balochistan serves the lowest level. The major factors accountable for under-development are socio-cultural values with less interest of education for girls, and inadequate schooling arrangements. It needs a mass social and education programs, particularly in rural areas, for twofold purpose. First, to raise the awareness of the importance of female education against social norms amongst

people. Second, the facilitation of primary and other levels female education in far-flung rural areas.



## Chapter 8 "Vulver": (The bride-price)

The Vulver (bride price) is an old institution which is practiced in Balochistan, NWFP, and even some parts of Sindh. It is popularly practiced in in Afghanistan too. It is strongly exercised in Balochistan, particularly in Pushto speaking areas

When and how did it begin? The question may be difficult to answer. One may not be able to pin point a specific date, but it is to pinpoint a specific date but it is clear that the custom goes back to primitive times. It began centuries back and is still practiced in traditional societies.

The payment of Vulver is imputed to the male side by the female members at the time a proposal of marriage is offered. There are no rules fixed about the amount of Vulver. It varies from case to case and situation to situation. It may be paid by the bridegroom, his parents/guardians or relatives. As most marriages in this country are pre-arranged the guardians often take on the responsibility of paying the bride price. Mostly though, it is the bridegroom himself who pays the price.

When a proposal is made to the bride's side, the demand for Vulver is made, this price is fixed by the girl's guardians. The amount of Vulver is demanded by the bride side, at the time a proposal is made. As the boy's side are the ones to initiate the proposal so the girl's side arrange the price, in this way each reach a point of mutual consent. Once the price is fixed upon the girl's side are usual inflexible and will refuse outright to reduce the sum. The advantage of settling Vulver is with the female side. The controversy or deadlock over the amount usually does not arise as one who proposes the marriage, already knows though closed sources the range of Vulver going to be demanded by the bride's parents. In case the amount of Vulver is too high for the boy's side a compromise may be made. Withdrawing from a match

because one cannot meet the bride price is not considered an advisable move. A young lawyer once told me that he was unable to marry the girl of his choice because the amount of Vulver believed to have been demanded by her parents was too high. "I was two lac (RS.200,000) plus jewelry for an additional 50,000", he said. The amount of Vulver, according to a sociologist who researched the subject in the Pathan areas of Balochistan, is usually higher if the boy does not belong to the girl's family.

Vulver restrictions amongst closed relatives are usually less imposing; nevertheless a sum of Vulver is demanded. The amount may be smaller. Many considerations are involved before Vulver is fixed by parents/guardians, including the consent of the girl being proposed to. They include, social and financial status of parents, age and physical appearance of girl, and family and social background of the boy's family. If a girl's family raise the price of Vulver unnecessarily high they may find it difficult to get their daughter married. An educated person from the areas where Vulver is entrenched said, "I have two daughters whom I am educating. I will lower the amount of Vulver if I find a suitable educated proposal for each..." when asked whether he would wave the charge of Vulver in case he finds an excellent match for his daughters, he replies, "I will probably not as it is rooted in our traditions. I paid Vulver for my wife thirty years ago."

The normal range of Vulver in Pushtu speaking areas is from Rs. 100,000 to 300,000. In Baloch and Sindhi areas where Vulver is practiced, the amount may be smaller. Vulver is paid before marriage takes place. The proposer can pay in cash or property, or in any other way determined by a bride's parents. A major portion of the payment of Vulver, says a young man, can be other than cash, "The affluent class," he notes, "prefer immovable property as payment of Vulver."

The use of Vulver is two sided. If the bride's family are not terribly well off, Vulver can be regarded as a



compensation for the expenses they have to bear such as the purchase of jewelry, clothes and other precious items. In any case the money comes back to the bridegroom when the girl becomes his wife.

Vulver is misused when the girl's family do not give it to her whole but spend it on wedding arrangements. This is usually the case with those parents who do not have a great deal of money. Under such circumstances the utilization of Vulver is not used for its express purpose goes and is an infringement upon the rights of the bride to whom Vulver was paid. It raises a bride's profile in her husband's house if her parents spend major portion of Vulver on buying her dowry. According to a tribe notable and social worker, who opposes the use of Vulver in majority of cases, "there is a misutilisation of Vulver, without serving a bride's need. It ought to be a taboo. It is aberrant and again the spirit of Vulver and traditions that gave birth to Vulver". He believed that demand of Vulver for the sake of monetary benefits can lead to unsuitable matches where bride is the major sufferer." This should be discouraged" he said, "It means that whoever can marries the girl of his choice, and guardians marry their daughters to the highest bidder."

In those areas where Vulver is entrenched, the practice is continued, even if the majority is against it. According to an extensive survey conducted by the Social Work department of the University of Balochistan, the educated class from areas where Vulver is practiced abhor its practice and those who support the system are generally from the uneducated. Similarly, guardians with more female children endorsed its continuation. The report said that it was very helpful in settling marriages. However many marriage proposals, succumbing to Vulver demands, were broken off. Vulver has become, in many cases, a symbol with the girl's side demanding hefty sums and the boy's side, in order to be thought more well off than they actually are, paying whatever price is set.

## Prison System in Balochistan: Does it need Reformation?

The prisons system in Balochistan has been posing an awful experience to inmates in jails in the province. Having undergone little expansion and improvement, the jails in Balochistan are too small and overcrowded to provide a regular service to inmates. Thus, they not only fail to serve the requirements of rehabilitation, but appear an infringement upon the rights of inmates in large. Balochistan inherited an insufficient prison structure after partition as there were not many jails in the areas included in Pakistan. Balochistan before partition of Pakistan was mainly divided into two units British Balochistan, and Native Balochistan/Princely Balochistan. The areas included in the British portion of Balochistan remained under the strict laws and regulations of British rule with British officers at higher command, while Native and Princely Balochistan was partially under British control, and remained more under the direct control of Sardars/Nawabs who all paid allegiance to Khan of Kalat. The crime and punishment regulation in those areas were different and largely controlled by tribal and common laws with Sardars being the highest arbitrators. Though means of justice (Qazi courts and Jirgas) existed, nevertheless, Sardars exercised a consequential role in regulating crime and punishment situation in their areas. They had lock ups or confinement centres, some of them existed to recent past.

During the heyday of the British rule when prison system was organized and jails were raised in different parts of India, two regular gaols were constructed in the British Balochistan. One was District jail at Quetta, and other was Central jail at Mach. Besides, two lock-up jails constructed for under-trial inmates during that period also existed in Zhob and Loralai. They both were later on converted to District



jails. All those imprisoned to longer sentences were shifted to Mach jail. In Quetta jail still majority of inmates were those under trial or with shorter sentences. Since the population of Balochistan was considerably small with low crimes rate, therefore, there did not appear any shortage of prisons for inmates.

The insufficient structure of jails in Balochistan is the major factor accountable for inmates' problems. After the partition with the mergence of native/pricely areas, constituting major portion of area, into Balochistan rapidly increased its population with more crimes rate. However, not adequate measures were adapted for the expansion of prison system. Though few jails were erected but they were smaller in size and lacked the rehabilitative purpose of a jail designed for long-term inmates. The one at Dera Murad Jamali and Turbat had the only capacity of inmates below one hundred. Some jails which were previously used as lock-ups, and after some expansion they were turned into district jails.

At present there are total 11 jails in Balochistan. Two new jails in Hub and Pishin are under construction, and may not be handed over to the prison department in near future. Two of them: at Mach and Mastung are the central jails. The rest are all District jails. The one at Mach is the only full-fledged jail in Balochistan with a capacity of 550 inmates. It covers an area of more than one square mile with different barracks designed to serve different purposes, is with enough factory area, and execution facilities. The one at Mastung is central jail in just name. It has only capacity of 50 inmates within area of not more than 100 square yards areas surrounded by 20 feet boundary wall shedding shadows over most of the day time. It has one barracks without any central jail facilities. "It causes enormous problem to inmates," said the acting superintendent jail, Mr. Riaz, "including health and rehabilitation. However, we are without any remedy until a new jail with required facilities is constructed."

The District jails, with the exception of Quetta jail, are

still smaller with less than 100 inmates capacity each. They lack enough space and are short of technical facilities for inmates. According to a report in 1984, four jails' buidling: Mastung, Loralai, Khuzdar, and Bella are strictly against the Pakistan Prison manuals. Similarly, they lack hospital facilities for inmates. Except Mach and Queta, all prisons in Balochistan are run without a qualified medical officer.

Because of the insufficient jailing system, according to the IG Prison Office of Balochistan, all prisons in Balochistan are overcrowded. At Mach there are 270 inmates more than its required capacity. At Mastung at present there are 80 inmates. Similarly, other district jails are overcrowded too. The one at Turbat, Khuzdar, Loralai and Sibi contain double of its required capacity. The situation is particular in Quetta jail, where rapid growing population and crimes have caused enormous problems of inmates' settlement there. The jail with a capacity of 350 inmates is packed with nearabout 600 inmates. Because of this, in some jails, which are exclusively meant for inmates under trial and those imprisoned to shorter sentences of less than one year, inmates with longer sentences are put only because of shortage of accommodation in major jails.

According to the Balochistan prison department, in seven of the jails in Balochistan, including central jail at Mastung, only those convicted inmates are held whose punishment is less than two year, but that is not possible under present circumstances. As mentioned, central jail Mach is the only jail with execution facilities. Therefore, all those sentenced to death sentences are shifted to Mach where they are kept in death cells barracks and remained there until a decision is made regarding the sentence. This cause enormous problem for their relatives coming from longer distance area of Balochistan and then seek permission to see them. According to one, it is an awful experience to see someone in death cell barracks at Mach, especially from many far-flung areas of Balochistan. It is more painful after one is hanged to

death, and transportation of his death body arises for his relatives. Balochistan contains a vast area, and hundreds of miles can count from one city to another. Similarly, the situation is fatiguing for those whose relatives are serving life sentences at Mach from long distance areas of Balochistan.

Also, in Balochistan, except Mach and Quetta jails, there are no separate/adequate arrangements for juvenile delinquents and female inmates. The juvenile delinquency has increased during the past many years in Balochistan as many below the age of 18 have been found involved in drug abuse, theft and murder cases. Not having separate arrangements in jails as they are overcrowded and small, the juvenile inmates mix up with many senior and habitual inmates. Similarly there is a problem of female inmates. The number of female inmates in Balochistan is very low, nevertheless, their has increased during the past years. The majority of them have been housed in Quetta, the only jail with a female prison officer and female wardens. Despite the Mach jail contains some female inmates in a separate female inmate barracks, yet no female warden/sentry exists. According to a jail official, in absense of a female warden, the jail administration is more concerned about female inmates. Similarly other jails administration faces a problem whenever a female inmate under trial without a bail is required by court. In that case she is temporarily housed in a judicial lock-up and soon moved to Quetta jail if sentenced or bail not granted. The only jail in Balochistan with technical workshop is Mach jail where inmates learn technical skills of carpentry, tailoring, carpet-making, weaving and iron-works. The rest with convicted inmates don't have regular factory/technical rehabilitation programs where their reformation can be possible, no matter they are engaged in heavy manual labor of kitchen, gardening and other jail jobs/services.

The prison setup in Balochistan remains undeveloped and irregular. At present it fails to serve its purpose, and needs major expansion and development to meet the

requirements of inmates' rehabilitative programs. It needs major reformation required for the rehabilitation inmates



### Central Jail, Mach

The central jail at Mach, Balochistan is one of the largest prisons in Pakistan, which in the British days was known as the toughest jail for notorious and habitual convicts all over the British India. The jail was built in 1929. Mach, a remote valley town in forty miles south of Quetta, was deemed a suitable place for this prison as it was surrounded by a chain of high mountains from where it was impossible for a captive to escape. Also, the railway linkage raised in 1894 that linked many towns of Balochistan with other parts of India, facilitated the transportation of prisoners. It soon became a famous jail for those convicted to long imprisonment for notorious and aberrant crimes, not only for Balochistan but other parts of India. "It was famous for infamous criminals and outlaws. Many of them from Balochistan and other parts were kept here. The famous outlaw of Ziarat: Jun Khan who ambushed many convoys and even killed a British officer was imprisoned here, and, later on, was hanged," said a sentry.

After the partition of India, it became the largest jail in Balochistan, if not of Pakistan, and prisoners with long imprisonments all over the country were put here. After the disunification of One-Unit, however, it was exclusively meant for convicts from Balochistan, except those sent for political reasons, and prisoners with short sentences were also gaoled here. The jail stretches over more than one square mile area, with more than seventeen barracks (called sheds), all designed for different purposes. They are surrounded by two boundary walls, each of them with more than a twenty feet height. There are six watch-towers where sentries are alert through out day and night for a watch out. Every barracks has a compound area covered by a corridor with one entrance door where a sentry stands. Majority of the barracks are prisoners barracks, each having 50 to 70 inmates. According

to the superintendent of jail, at present there were 742 inmates in Mach jail, 700 are convicted and 42 are awaiting trial. "The present strength of inmates is against than the capacity of 570 fixed during the British days. But since the shortage of jails in Balochistan, this jail is always overcrowded," he said. In Balochistan, unlike other provinces, there are few jails and they, except Mach and Quetta, are very small without regular jail manual services. There are seven barracks of regular prisoners above the age of 18. They all were convicted to rigorous imprisonment, ranging from one year to 35 years. Though no regular categorization of inmates exist in those barracks, however, as the superintendent said, a possible effort is made to consider the age and culture differences of inmates in barracks. "This way we can avoid a lot of trouble. The age and socio-language akinness amongst inmates helps overcoming any physical tussle among them. "In the barrack they all live together in ward style with each one of his bed made of bricks.

Another big barracks (shed no 9) contained juvenile delinquents, all below the age of 18. To one's surprise, there were a total of 79 inmates, many of them appeared too cute and innocent to be believed for juvenile delinquency. One: Usman from Jaffarabad, sentenced to two-year imprisonment was convicted of attempting an assault on a women. Some of them were guilty of carrying illegal arms and drugs. Many of them, nevertheless, were serving sentences for theft and murder cases. They all belonged to lower class of society without any significant education. A couple of them were metric and were trying to improve their education.

There were only five female inmates being guilty of Hudood and murder cases. They live in a separate barrack where a female warden is to supervise them. At current, there is no lady warden/jailer in Mach jail, and superintendent feels more responsible for the female prisoners. "We feel more accountability for female inmates when there is no female warden. Two old aged sentries are only allowed to visit them, and whenever I or Deputy Superintendent visit their barrack,



they both accompany us," said the Superintendent. Two of the barracks have solitary cells. Unlike the general barracks, those in these barracks live cubical cells, not big enough to accommodate two inmates with comfort. The solitary cells were actually meant for those whose conduct became too aberrant for other inmates or those who seriously violated jail rules. "They were sent for solitary confinement," said Mr. Fazal Amin, a grey-haired Assistant Jailer who had spent 35 years of his service in Balochistan prisons. "It was common and torturous to live in solitary cells in British days. One could not talk to his next cell inmate for months. Political prisoners were often kept in these cells." "The situation is changed now. Prisoners now approach for solitary cells where they are at more ease. The solitary cells now are not solitary confinement. They are not locked in their cells all the day, except one hour, as was during the British days, and can move independently in the barracks in free hours. "Still few of those who seriously defy jail rules can be sent to solitary confinement and are not allowed outside his cell. All inmates in Jail, according to the jail rules, except those condemned to death sentences and solitary confinement, remain under lock from 6.30 p.m. to 6.30 a.m.

Political prisoners and "B" class barracks has each 25 cells. Then neither of "B" class nor political prisoner was held in Mach Jail. They were shifted to Quetta District Jail, therefore, the both barracks are empty. Mach jail has been the famous abode for political prisoners, where many important political figures of Pakistan, particularly of Balochistan, had been detained in past. According to a jailer, during the Ayub Khan period, there were largest number of political detainees in Mach. The jail library which comprise more than 2,000 books includes many important collections which were donated by political captives during their days of captivity. Ahmed Ali, a educated murder case convicted to 14 years, was the library incharge. He told that each inmate is entitled to borrow one book for one week period. Some of the books, i.e., Linda Goodman's "Sun Signs" or D.H.Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers" may not be

checked out for reading, nevertheless, inmates borrow in lot the urdu fictions, stories and Islamic books.

In the remote corner of the jail, there is a barracks where those sentenced to death penalty are held until the final decision. The barracks contain twenty solitary cells in the compound, known as "death cells". At present there are sixteen inmates, some of them have got their appeals rejected are awaiting sentences. Compared to other barracks, there are many sentries around it with more surveillance in and out side the compound, inmates from other barracks are not allowed to go inside the compound. All those are shifted to death cells, live in a separate cell. They are locked all the day in the cell except for one hour a day (twice a day for thirty minutes each) they are freed. They can walk inside the compound with their hands tightly cuffed. "Death cells are awful to live, and the toughest of prison life as one spends 23 hours of a day in a small cell," said a prisoner who had remained in one of the death cells for one a year. He was sentenced to death, later on, his death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. "That year was the bitterest of my life, I saw many of death cells inmate dragged to gallows pole across the compound with a chill of fear and grief. It was during martial law and hangings were rapid," said the man. Those whose appeals for commutation of death sentence are rejected, await gallows. According to prison rules, one is informed not many hours before he is hanged. He is asked to take bath in his cell and read verses of Quran. "It usually happens few hours before dawn. Soon after he completes the requirements, he is led to gallows. He is handcuffed, may be blind folded and his feet are fastened at the time he is hanged." said a sentry on death cells barracks. All inmates are kept locked and strict security measures are adapted. Those whose presence is must at the time a hanging is going on, are Superintendent of Jail, Deputy Superintendent or Jailers, jail Medical Officer and a magistrate. He must have been hanged to death before sun rises.

Death sentences in Mach jail are often as this the only prison in Balochistan where accused are accused are hanged to



death. All those who are sentenced to death in Balochistan are shifted to Mach jail. The death sentences in Mach jail are carried in an open yard compound with a gallows where three persons can be executed at a time.

Mach jail has a large factory area with four barracks where in one day shift, from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. with only one hour break, four to five hundred convicted inmates learn and do any of the skills: carpentry, tailoring, carpet-making, weaving and iron-works. Carpets, bed sheets and "khaddar" a light coarse cloth made at Mach jail are popular in Balochistan. All the inmates' and sentries' uniform requirements is met through the jail factory products. All those inmates sentenced to manual labour without working in factory, perform other labour.

"The Mach jail is toughest as lot of manual work is taken from majority of convicted inmates," said a social worker. They labour at jail kitchen, jail gardens, laundry yard, barber shop and officers' residences, a privilege to jail officers. Fifty prisoners, all those whose six month to one year sentence remains, work in jail garden by farming, cutting, and trimming. A batch of thirty do the kitchen job where three-time food is served for inmates. Besides other food items, approximately 3,000 "rootis" are baked a day. Many of them do the hospital work and nursing to sick and wounded inmates. Some of inmates perform the duties of informing inmates whom their friends have called upon. All except death cell inmates or one punished to solitary confinement by the jail authorities, are entitled to see their visitors. The visitors to death and solitary cell inmates, if allowed by Superintendent can visit them to their cells.

Similarly, some with education can do the office work for jail, i.e. typing and filing. Inmates with good record are also appointed "Muberdar" and "Senepose", a disciplinary force for inmates. They can afford physical punishment to those who do violates jail rules. They wear canoe style red and green hats, which makes them more distinct.

Jail life is an uncomfortable disciplined life designed to regulate and reform those convicted to various imprisonments,

though the true purpose of jail life is believed to have failed to serve its purpose of reformation in Pakistan. The life at Mach jail may not be exception to that fact, however, its function as a gaol is important. It is a prisoners' world living away from meddling crowds.

### October 1992 Ethnic Violence:

The October 1992 rumblings of ethnic conflicts in Balochistan posed multiple challenges to the economic and socio-political development of the province. Although Balochistan's ethnic peace has always been tenuous, lying behind the spurt of ethnic violence were October's tensions between the two leading communities, Baloch and Pathans. The bone of contention was the change in the location for the construction of an Agricultural College of Balochistan from Baloch area, Mastung to a Pathan area, Bosthan. This resulted in ethnic violence in different parts of Balochistan, including the provincial capital, Quetta. It not only claimed human lives on both sides, but a huge trade loss all over the province also resulted due to continuous business and wheel jam strikes.

The party which was active in staging protests and strikes was the Balochistan National Movement (BNM) supported by the Baloch Students Organization (BSO). They led processions, blocked major routes in Baloch areas, closed down shops and business. Against them was pitted the Pakhtoonkwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) which reckoned the politics of strikes a struggle against Pathans' interests in the province. The PMAP vowed to fight for their interests irrespective of the cost involved.

The construction of the Agricultural college, irrespective of its site in Mastung or Bosthan, both within less than one hour's drive from Quetta, was essential to boost agricultural sector in the province. However, following the ethnic turmoil, the EEC, which had assured allotment of major finances for the construction of college, was reportedly withdrawn its funds to the project. The fund, later on, was allowed to Sri Lanka, and now the college is being raised there. A hard luck for Balochistan. Subsequently, ethnic

temper ran high and clashes again took place, when 12 new wards were included in the Quetta Municipal Corporation, elections for which were to be held on May 7, 1992. The major opposition to the decision came from the PMAP. They dubbed the decision as faulty because according to them it was meant to outnumber Pathan councillors against Baloch to ensure the election of a Baloch Mayor.

The population of the new wards is believed to be predominantly Baloch/Brahui. Other political parties, the BNM, and Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP), lauded the inclusion of new wards as necessary to promote the electoral rights of the population of those wards, who otherwise do not have enough say in the election of their councillors. There was a slight problem in this regard however. It is that in Balochistan, no census has taken place since 1981. Therefore, the exact representation of new constituencies on the basis of population is difficult to figure out.

The situation took a serious turn when a PMAP veteran, Rahim Khan Mandookhal, a senator from Balochistan, went on hunger strike till death if the decision to hold elections for the 12 newly incorporated wards was not reversed. The PMAP called for a three-day wheel jam strike in Quetta. The IJI led coalition government in the province gave in. It postponed elections for Quetta Municipal and District Council. Later on, it also decided to cancel the standing of all wards in Quetta Municipal Corporation, and appointed a judicial commission to probe into the matter of future demarcation of all wards/constituencies for Quetta Municipal Corporation elections.

The BNM and the JWP opposed these decisions and unanimously called for holding elections even in the 12 wards. This demand was echoed by Mr. Sanaullah Zehri, the provincial minister for local bodies. This was followed by appeals by these parties for strike in Quetta and the surrounding Baloch dominated areas.

The complex situation that one sees in Balochistan



has a lot to do with the province's intricate social conditions. The province is divided into three major ethnic groups: Baloch/Brahui, Pathan; and those settlers who have migrated from different parts of the country and have settled mainly in Quetta. The Baloch, according to 1981 census, constituted the larger part of the population, spreading over the western and southern Balochistan including the coastal belt touching Karachi. Out of six administrative divisions, the Baloch are in majority in four: Kalat, Mekran, Sibi and Nasir Abad. They speak four different languages: Blochi, Brahui, Mekrani, Sindhi and Siraki. The Pathans, who are the second major ethnic group, are in an absolute majority in two most thickly populated divisions: Quetta and Zhob. Unlike Baloch, the Pathans speak one language, Pushto. Their population is believed to have grown rapidly since 1981. This can be attributed to the influx of Afghan refugees, who according to the unofficial reports, constituted half of the overall population of Balochistan. Majority of the Afghan refugees were rehabilitated in Pushto speaking areas. Many of them carry national identity cards and exercise the right of vote in elections. Balochistan is divided into political pockets with an entrenched tribal system. No individual party has won simple majority in the provincial assembly so far, and no elected government has ever been free from the burden of coalitions. With the possible exception of JUI-F, the PPP and IJI, all other political parties in Balochistan have their constituencies based on ethnic lines. The major support for the PMAP comes from the Pathan area, and its rival political group in those areas is the JUI. Similarly, the BNM, the JWP and the PNP are strong in Baloch belt and are mostly supported by the Baloch population. Under these conditions ethnic contradictions sharpen when these ethnically based parties play the ethnic card to muster political support. Both Baloch and Pathan communities have their veritable and de facto domains, except Quetta. Quetta city and its surroundings have witnessed great urbanization during the last two

decades. In the wake of any ethnic clash, Quetta becomes the stage of all actions, entailing protest rallies, wheel jam strikes, and closing down of shops and business. Quetta has a mixed population, containing Pathans, Balochs, Hazaras (locals of Quetta), and other settlers. The settlers, according to 1981 census, constitute the largest section of population in Quetta, followed by Pathans, although the latter claim to have gained majority in the past years. Every time there was an ethnic crises, life in Quetta was to standstill. First, because of the fear of ethnic clashes that could lead to a series of strikes. Second, because of the precautionary measures taken by the provincial government to avert any bloodshed.

The major sufferers of this persistent ethnic turmoil were businessmen, including shop owners, fruit merchants and daily wage earners whose activities come to a halt whenever ethnic tensions flared up. Other than these commercial and small business men, the Pathans suffered most. This was because they dominate the business of fruit and transport, and hence depend on the routes passing through Baloch belts for all major transportation to Karachi, Sindh, and Punjab.

The ethnic gap between Baloch and Pathan widened in 1991, mostly because of the political elite of the province continue to play on the ethnic sentiments of their respective supporters. However, later on, the tension was reduced. In 1992 PMAP joined the government, and was offered ministries in the Jamali cabinet. Things appeared quite normal after.



## Chapter 12 A Migration after Migration

The return of Marri tribesmen from Afghanistan to Balochistan, Pakistan was one of the major changes resulting from political shifts in Afghanistan on Balochistan, where the collapse of Soviet supported Najibullah regime was replaced by opposite groups. More than nine thousands Marri tribesmen, following the coming back of their chief, Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri to Balochistan, return to the native province they began fleeing more than a decade ago. The Marri tribe, known for their disciplined and entrenched tribal set up, is the largest of all tribes in sparsely populated Balochistan.

Having spread on a vast area, stretching from vicinities of Ziarat district to lower tops of Sui and Kasmoor area near Sind and Punjab, they inhabit strategically important mountain terrains of Balochistan where means of transportation are still without a network of regular roads. Despite the man force, they are least developed with almost 2% male education. They come under an entrenched control of chief (Sardar), to whose centralized command they pay allegiance. The fidelity to Sardar is incumbent upon all tribesmen for mobilizing support over any tribal issue in war and peace.

The migration to Afghanistan for larger number, as recalls a gray-haired Marri, though happened after 1980, however, it actually began in 1974 following the military operation by Pakistan army against the Marri tribes for alleged insurgency. The military action followed the Lesbela and Tandoori incidents where Marri tribes attacked the Frontier Corps (FC)'s garrisons/convoys. "I belong to the first band of those who fled to Afghanistan," he said. "I covered all the journey on foot and by the time I crossed border to Afghanistan, my shoes were worn out and feet bleeding. Few

months later I was joined by other tribesmen, including some of my family members". The migration to him, continued for next tow year. It accelerated after Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri decided to live in exile. Khair Bakhsh Marri, the chief of Marri and a veteran participant in Baloch politics who leant towards leftism, opted out of Pakistan for self-exile. Khair Bakhsh, was among those who awaited the Hyderabad conspiracy trial decision in Hyderabad prison. He was released from Hyderabad jail in January 1978. In 1978, he proceeded to London and lived there until 1981. After he lived in exile in Moscow and Kabul, mostly in Kabul, and did not return to Pakistan until June 1992. "His tribesmen followed him" retorted another Marri from Afghanistan, "It was ultimately his ruling choice, conveyed to us through his lieutenants, that mobilized us to migrate to Afghanistan in 1981 onward. like many, some of our family men were already there. "Unlike those who fled in 1970s, they met least resistance from either side's border militias. According to him, he moved to Quandar first, later on, he was transported to Helmand province where he joined newly raised inhibitory of Marris from Pakistan.

In Afghanistan, they lived in two provinces: Qandahar and Helmand. The number of those residing in Helmand was, however, much larger. They lived in a desert plain area of Kalla Kona village at five miles distance from city without electricity that, a young Marri justified, could have comforted their stay in small houses in hot summer. "It was possible, and we were assured by the Karmal and Najibullah government men, but ravages of civil war made it impossible. Even the city of Helmand, Laskar Gah remained in darkness for days following a major raid by anti-revolutionary forces on power installations," said he. He, nevertheless, recalled the generator-run tube-lights of a nearby garrison occupied by Soviet troops to defend the capital city Lasker Gah and Helmand city from Mujahiddins' counterattacks, which were frequent. Majority of Soviet army men, he saw in Helmand



and Nemruz provinces were young commanded by few middle-aged officers. When asked about whether they feared Soviets, he said, "No they did not say anything to us as they knew we not against the government." "Really we not received threat from Mujahiddins, probably we were not engaged in any resistance activities to them. "However, as many nodded, they feared the anti-revolutionary forces as they received benefits from the government agencies. Everyone received 1500 Afghanies a month through their camp commanders plus irregular ration and medical aids. Those who lived in Qandahar had the similar experiences of life, with the only difference of more war threats and less freedom for job opportunities in Qandahar than Helmand a factor responsible for majority's shift to Helmand.

The Qandahar section of Marri tribesmen were under the command of Sher Mohammad Marri, known as General Shero and Hazar Khan Bijrani (a sub-caste of Marri). General Shero died on May 11, 1993 in India. His body was flown to Pakistan and was buried at his home town in Kohlu. They, later, showed differences towards Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri. The differences developed between them, while in Afghanistan, during the Najib period, over issues still not much is known about. They, however, appeared a division between the two sides. Hazar Khan, last week, in his interview with the "Jangh" forum, raised his discontent with Nawab's policies during his stay in Kabul that alienated much the Marri's interests. To him, Nawab's policies ignored Marri's genuine interests. Also, he negated the growing role of Nawab's influence in future politics of Marri tribes as his sub-caste tribe, Bajrani outnumbers Nawab's Ghazini. Bajrani's followers, left not to big numbers in Qandahar, had returned Pakistan during the last days of Najib's rule. Everything seemed changed with the growing discontent of Soviets' position in Afghanistan.

The fall of Najib staked the future of Marri tribesmen in Afghanistan, particularly Khair Bakhsh's family and body

guards in Kabul. They were immediately concerned with a way out of Afghanistan without a delay. "Everyone of us", said a Marri, "was worried over the growing anarchy in first weeks following the Najib's fall." According to another, it was still aidful that Hikmatyar's forces did not take Kabul and even Helmand, otherwise the things might have been more miserable. However, it was perceived that Hikmatyar's men might attack in future. They feared other forces supporting Hikmatyar. Nawab Khair Bakhsh's return to Pakistan was facilitated by both governments in Kabul and Pakistan. All those in Helmand, including some of Bugti families who joined them in migration to Afghanistan, had received the signal for return without any delay through Zaranj routes in Nimruz province to Balochistan. The journeys through Qandahar was perceived risky and could entail attack threats from fundamentalists, even those anti-Mujadidi's forces. The journeys through Zaranj routes to Chagi area in Balochistan were safe. Their return to Pakistan, as many believe, might not be an easy choice as many had supposedly turned over a new leaf under the group solidarity in Afghanistan, though they were left with little choice under the circumstances they left. They were engaged in petty labor jobs, cattle-raising and land cultivation. Many of their children had started going to local schools. According to one source, a nearabout 300 lads during Karmal regime period were flown to Moscow with thousands of other Afghan children conscripted for education there, they are still there.

They have returned Pakistan leaving, less or more, all of their property behind. They all are temporarily sheltered in camps in the plain bed of mountain Chiltan, four miles in south-east of Quetta. They seem to have absorbed many cultural norms of the areas they spent the past years. Now everyone can communicate in Pushto, their children having born and grown up there, can even communicate in Dari/Persian. Yet it is not clear what will be the future arrangements by government and their leaders for their

settlement as they claim to have the property and land they left, many show doubts about. However, they are in need of medical and food facilities, and future settlement of their children education.

## Minorities in Balochistan

Balochistan contains a larger number of minority population which, in many anthropologists/sociologists analysis, not only stands a peculiarity of the minority division but a symbol of minority population status quo in an ideological state. Though there has appeared a threat to the religious freedom of some, nevertheless, they have enjoyed more socio-cultural assimilation and political rights. According to the census report 1981, in Balochistan, the minorities' division was following. There were Christians 29,000, Hindus 27,000, Qadiyanis/Ahemides 6,000, Parsee 4,000, Sikhs 2,000 and Bhahi 700. The, nonetheless, like the rest of population, has been increased during the past decade. Constituting 5% of the the total population, and 20% of Quetta, the capital city, population, the minorities in Balochistan have shared an important socio-cultural and economic co-existence in the province. They have 3 minority seats out of a 43-member Assembly which proportion of minority seats wise is higher than any other province.

Christians and Hindu are the two largest minority communities of Balochistan. Christians, absolute majority of them belonging to protestant church, are the urban population living in the Quetta, Loralai, and Sibi. Quetta, the capital city of Balochistan contains a major christian population all over and three church areas where every Sunday, one can see hundreds of those coming to church prayers from all around. The Christians community of Balochistan, economically is not much advanced. Majority of them belong to lower or lower middle class without having made any significant advancement in trade, fiance or business. majority of them are salaried class, belonging to different professions, particularly medical and education. "In the promotion of medical and education services in Balochistan," said a sociologist, "Christians provided enormous services. In her analysis, a



larger number of nursing staff all over civil hospitals in the province belong to them. The Mission/Christian hospital Quetta is one of the ideal hospitals with a nursing school for Mission hospitals in particular and other hospitals in general, all over Pakistan. Similarly, services rendered by the community in the field of education are distinct, particularly in schools. Three of the famous schools: Mission High School, Grammar School, and Saint Joseph High School in Quetta, are run by them; they are functioning before partition. A larger number of people in civil and military services in Balochistan graduated from these institutions. According to an ex-Attorney General of Pakistan from Balochistan, "When the province was lagging behind with inadequate schooling, the christian community-run schools catered for educational needs of the people, and enhanced the cause of education." The community's political interests are served by one MPA minister: Ashraf Johnson from the PDA; he was elected on minority seat for Christians.

The Hindu minority in Balochistan constitutes a considerable portion of the over all Hindu population in Pakistan. They being indigenous to the land, to many sociologists, had enjoyed the true status of a religious minority by their assimilation in socio-cultural and economic fabric of life in an overwhelming ideological state. They are settled in many of urban and rural areas of Balochistan, particularly in Balochi/Barahvi areas. They speak the native languages, and adapted much to socio-cultural norms of the area without developing any gulf in the relationship with the local populace.

At the time of partition, when sectarian riots ravaged the sub-continent, the Hindu population of Balochistan remained unharmed, mainly due to two factors. First, the major portion of Balochistan native/princely Balochistan where majority of Hindus lived, was under the Khan of Kalat, the chief ruler of Kalat state, Yar Mohammad Khan, who respected indigenusness of the Hindu community. He had

assured them of economic and religious freedom in case they decided to continue living in Balochistan. Second, a reciprocity of mutual relationship between Muslims and Hindus, and prosperity in business encouraged them to abandon the idea of migrating to India. After the inclusion of Kalat state in Pakistan, in 1948, the Hindu population enjoyed every bit of religious and economic freedom and held trade monopoly. They live in Quetta, Kalat, Sibi, Mustung, Dahdar, Duki, Dalbrdin, Chamman, and Gandawa. In Gandawa, a tiny town and newly raised headquarter of Jhall Magsi district, they have a big temple, which is claimed to be the fifth largest Hindu temple in sub-continent. They dwell in their own little colonies, usually not away from their temples. They belong to business class, without any major interest in education and government offices. Some of them are wealthy merchants owning large jewelry and general stores, but the majority is of middle and lower middle class businessmen with their shops/stores in the bazaars of various towns. The community received a setback to their live and property interests after the Ayodhya incident, where in retaliation to Hindu fanaticism to Babri mosque, many Hindus were killed and temples/houses and shops were destroyed in mob violence against them. The anti-Hindus riots created serious doubts among the Hindu community in Balochistan about their peaceful co-existence with the Muslims that they had enjoyed since 1947.

Qadiyanis are the third largest minority in Balochistan. Majority of them live in Quetta, though some of them own properties and are settled down in Sibi, Khuzdar and Loralai. The Ahmedia community in Balochistan is highly educated. The ratio of literacy among the community is highest than other minorities, though there is less inclination towards government offices. It is after they were declared minority and thus found less encouragement in government services. The community was very influential in government affairs and even politics of province," said a civil servant, "as many of the community member carried higher ranks in military/civil



services and judiciary." "Now their influence is minimal," agreed on he. The community has undergone a change of aptitude, a senior member of the community believes, from public offices to private business. It is largely because of the minority status and resistance to their religious activities by government. "This," he believed, "cannot allow them higher offices in government." They, however, are in number, in various professions, such as education, health, journalism and judiciary. Many of them are leading advocates in Balochistan. The community members blame the government to show religious prejudices against the community through the Prohibition of Qadiyniat Ordinance where two sections of Pakistan Penal Code were amended and they were prohibited from use of word, "Masid" and reciting Azan and building minarets.

The Parsee community in Balochistan, like Hindus, constitutes a larger portion of the Parsee population in Pakistan. Their ancestors believed to have migrated from Persia in 19th century to India. They claim that their kith and kin live in Bombay and other cities of India, other than many in living in Karachi. They are urban people. The bulk of them live in Quetta, some families may have settled in few other cities of Balochistan. In Quetta, they have a large colony where they live under a strong group homogeneity with little acceptance of structuring relationship outside the community. "The Parsees are educated and culturally advanced," said an anthropologist, "they may not be much inclined to government offices, however, they promote the idea of education." Many of the community members from Balochistan have held important offices, such as Mr. Poonegar, the ex-chief secretary of Balochistan, and Mr. Jamshid Markar, the Pakistani ambassador in US.

The Parsee people are more inclined towards business. They own properties and shops in important localities of Quetta. The parsee community shows no interest in politics and have remained politically inactive in

minorities' politics, though they could mobilize an influential role. One of the community members: Farriddun remained an adviser to chief minister during Nawab government. The appointment was made to mobilize Parsees' participation to forward their interests. The community's relationship with those in Iran is believed to be a source of major financial help before the revolution 1979 as the latter enjoyed trade and business benefits and concessions by the Shah regime. "The revolution in Iran undermined Parsees' economic interests in Iran, and so ours," said a Parsee merchant in Quetta."

The Sikhs in Balochistan, according to the census report are not more than 3,000, even with a possibility that those living inside province may be smaller in size. The opposition alleged that the care-taker government of Hamayun Marri at behest of Nawab Bugti, showed a big number of Hindus converting to Sikhs to strengthen their strength as the candidate belonged to Nawab's Jamoori Watan Party (JWP). At the time of partition, Balochistan contained a big number of Sikhs, nevertheless, many families of them migrated to India. Bhaies constitute a smaller number, settled in Quetta.

The Bhai community in Balochistan is engaged in business without much establishment. They believed to have received major financial help from Bahi community in Iran. They perceived the revolution a blow to their interests too as loss of business and trade preferences, the Bhaies had enjoyed in Iran, suffered their fellows in Balochistan. A large number of them migrated from Iran to Balochistan after revolution, have secured asylum abroad. Minorities in Balochistan stands a symbol of minority population as they have enjoyed more socio-political and economic assimilation and religious freedom. The religious extremism of some parties might have undermined the minority rights of communities, particularly over religion as experienced during anti-Hindu riots last year or religious resistance to Qadiyanis in past, nonetheless, they have experienced broader mobilization of minority status quo



62  
than other area of Pakistan.

63  
**Chapter 14**  
**Ayodhia Incident and Hindu Minority**  
**Status in Balochistan**

The holocaust in the aftermath of the desecration of Babri mosque in Ayodhia threatened the security of Hindu minority in Balochistan. The Hindu population in Balochistan which had been enjoying a true status of a religious minority by assimilating much in the socio-cultural and economic life of the province, which to many sociologists/anthropologists served a model of a religious minority in an overwhelming ideological state, all of a sudden seems to have a set back to the status quo they had enjoyed since 1947. In Balochistan, the Hindu community, constitutes a considerable portion of overall Hindu population in Pakistan. According to the 1981 census, they were 27,000; the strength has increased. They are indigenous to the land of Balochistan as they have resided in majority of cities in Balochistan, particularly in Baloch/Barahvi areas, for the last many generations. They speak the native languages, and have adapted much to socio-cultural norms of area without developing any gap of relationship with local populace. One can see their Mundars in many towns of Balochistan. At the time of partition, when holocausts of sectarian riots ravaged the sub-continent, and Hindu massacre in retaliation to Muslims massacre in the divided portions of Muslim India, the Hindu population in Balochistan escaped destruction.

The Hindu minority profile in Balochistan was mainly due to two factors. First, the major portion of Balochistan, native/princely Balochistan where majority of Hindus lived, was under the Khan of Kalat, the chief ruler of Kalat state, Yar Khan. He believed to have developed a regard for indigenesness of Hindu community to the land they had lived in, and wanted them not to migrate to India. They were active in state affairs. Three of his ministers/Diwans including

the chief Diwan of financial/estates affairs. He had shown them an assurance of economic, social and religious freedom in case they decided to continue living there. Second, a reciprocity of mutual relationship between the two communities: Muslims and Hindus existed. The latter were prosperous in business and thus had encouragement to abandon any idea of migration to India. Therefore, they were not very supportive of migrating to India. The Hindu migration from Balochistan to India, unlike other parts of Pakistan, did not result in large. After the inclusion of Kalat state into Pakistan in 1948, the Hindu population enjoyed religious and economic benefits and held major trade business. The majority of Hindus in Balochistan live in urban areas with little number in rural areas. Besides major district towns of Balochistan, Kalat, Sibi, Nuski, Loralai, Dera Bugti, Dahdar and Mustung, they reside in small towns of Gandawa, Chaman, Duki and Dal Badin. In some towns they dwell in fraternity with their houses built within a colony, usually not away from their temples.

Soon after the incident of the desecration Babri mosque that led to a volcano of bitter protests/demonstrations against the action by people in Pakistan, a threat appeared to the lives and properties in Balochistan, "the severity of threat," as the government sources claimed, "was more than commonly expected." The next day which was claimed as the protest day all over the country, crowds of people in many towns and cities, particularly Quetta, Loralai, Sibi, Noski and Mastung, staged demonstration and showed much anger in violence and attacked Hindus' installations. The first to come under attack were temples, shops and community centers. The Hindu community in Balochistan belongs to business class. Many of them are wealthy merchants owing expensive jewelry and general stores. Majority of them are middle and lower middle class businessmen with their shops/stores in different corners

of bazaars in different cities. The angered processions going through bazaars set many of their shops afire and took away expensive items, as news reporters and those suffered losses report.

Many of Hindus temples and houses were attacked and residents beaten. In Loralai, an angered mob set a house afire where five children of a family died and many suffered injuries. The family member believed to have begged for not killing the people, and could demolish their temples instead. The law and enforcement agencies forces reached to the scene while much damage had been occurred. The District administration authorities claimed to rescue many of Hindu families otherwise the death tolls might have been higher. Among those arrested for staging the attack belonged to the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) and Anjamine Shahaba Islam (ASI).

Similarly, crowds of protesters in Noski, Sibi and Mastung districts resulted in killing if many Hindus. "The law and order situation became so tense that curfew was clamped over all three districts for days to avert further destructions of Hindus' properties and lives," said an official handout. According to one "the situation changed dramatically and suddenly with a vow for ravages against Hindus," said a political worker, "The rallies comprising thousands of participants were out of one's control except government interference with a large use of force. But government was not prepared at first. The things were taken easily".

The rages against Hindus, no doubt, sprang from the retaliation over the desecration of mosque incident which enraged every Muslim's sentiments over fanaticism of all those accountable for, and for which hardly anything can compensate for. The major persuasions for targeting Hindus' installations had religious orientations, but it became rather a mob rule which could be diverted anywhere once their sentiments were raised and they were mobilized on streets. The processions, nonetheless, entailed political persuasions.



The major political parties rooted in Baloch and Pathan areas: Balochistan National Movement (BNM), Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP), Pakistan National Party (PNP) and Pakhtoonkwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) gave voice to extra security measurements by government to prevent any possibility of violence against Hindus. The JWP, which has the support of two minority MPAs (Sikh and Hindu) blames the IJI coalition government for not adapting enough precautionary measures to stop mobs against them. According to one, "such a retaliation can always result in destruction. This is the government sheer responsibility to secure a minority in such a situation." "The government also perceived political benefits from the resistance to divert public attention from the long march." The government blames JUI for appearing more vocal in raising public sentiments for violence against Hindus. The JUI, now in opposition to government, was louder in protest against the desecration. The party, however, has denied any its motives for any action that could lead to undermine Hindus' property and lives. They rather allege the government for creating such a situation through media where violence against Hindus became more possible.

The anti-Hindus riots have made the Hindu community in Balochistan perturbed over the future peaceful social coexistence they had enjoyed since 1947. The community leaders who have repeatedly condemned the desecration of Babri mosque as an action of Hindu fanaticism, have appealed the government and political and religious parties not to let them a victim of anguishing crowds in future that could cost them lives and properties. According to one Hindu leader, "We are badly disturbed over our future security. We have suffered a sudden losses in lives and properties without any involvement in the scene. We openly condemned any fanaticism that led to the desecration of mosque in Ayodhya. "They regarded the desecration aberrant of secularism in India.

The recent attacks on Hindus' lives and properties have concerned them about their future security they are entitled to have as a minority. The Hindus in Balochistan, which constitute a major portion of overall Hindu population, are settled in different cities of Balochistan. They business community being actively engaged in business/trade all over the province without having caused any threat to national security. They, in a situation where population in Pakistan react to Hindu fanaticism in India, need extra government protection against any violence to their lives and properties.

## Chapter 15 Local Bodies Elections 1992

Local bodies elections were held in Balochistan on May 7, 1992. While local bodies elections can in no way be compared to national elections, they are nevertheless highly important. A successful candidate is given the mandate of the local people on the one hand, and on the other, has access to the administrative machine. In the job, whether wielding clout as a members or chairman of councils, or in close contact with the voters, he is in an ideal situation to muster political support for future elections. If seen to be effective, chances are that voters will help him the make move to the provincial or national assemblies.

The break up of the local bodies is as follows: Municipal Corporation-1; District Council-24; Municipal Committees-14; Union Committees-22; Union Councils-36. The total number of registered voters was 2,753,000 while 10,635 candidates filed papers to contest on May 7th elections.

In Balochistan, the tribal vote amounts to a hearty slice of the total vote block. Tribalism is entrenched in both Pathan and Baloch areas, and the results show how faithful tribals are in putting their own man in power.

Inter-tribe rivalry develops during the election campaign and polling days as every tribal group makes its bid to secure more seats. This is particularly true for the District Council, an important tier in the hierarchy of local bodies. Mobilisation of tribal support for the chairmanship of union committees and councils also accounts for tribal feuds in many rural areas of Balochistan.

As was seen in the recent elections, if chieftains or men's groups are to win seats to the local bodies they must be assured of their tribes support. For example, the Jam Yousaf group claimed successes for different local bodies tiers

including the District Council in Lasbela district. Similarly, they group of Karim Noshewani's, a minister in Jamali cabinet did well in Kehran district by sweeping to victory in the majority of constituencies. Another group, led by chieftain, Zulfiqar Magsi, the former Interior Minister and later on, Chief Minister of Balochistan, won by a margin in Bolan, and Jhal Magsi districts. A larger number of constituencies in local bodies tiers followed a tribal division rather than an ethnic one. The only cities where ethnic division followed were Quetta, Sibi Khuzdar and Hub. Major ethnic tension was built in Quetta, the capital of Balochistan where bitter ethnic rivalry between Pathan and Baloch had developed.

For the last few years, Quetta has become a cockpit of ethnic politics. There are frequent calls for business and wheel jam strikes by the two communities: Baloch and Pathan over issues in favor or against each other's claims of interests. During the ongoing scene of ethnic rivalry which developed over the inclusion of 12 new wards in Quetta Municipal Corporation, there resulted a standstill disruption of commercial life in Quetta due to continual business and wheel jam strikes. The Pakhtoonkwa Milli Awami Party (PMAP) protested against the inclusion of new constituencies in Quetta Municipal Corporation, for which an election was to be held on May 7th, 1992. They said it was an unjustified step to raise the number of Baloch councillors against Pathans because the population of newly raised wards was predominantly Baloch/Brahui. The PMAP claimed that the population of these wards was much smaller in size and they did not qualify to constitute an separate constituency. In Balochistan, no census has taken place since 1981, therefore, any official increase in the size of constituencies was not available.

The major political parties to support the inclusion of new ward were Balochistan National Movement (BNM) and Jamoohri Watan Party (JWP). The Pakistan National Party (PNP) later joined the stand of these parties, stating that the



raising of the 12 new wards would be a necessary to mark the increase of population. Once they started paying taxes to the corporation, say the PNP they can automatically have a larger say in the Corporation affairs by electing councillors from their constituencies.

Due to the growing tension over the issue, which had posed a big threat to the law and order situation in Quetta, Jamali's coalition government not only postponed the elections for the Municipal Corporation but canceled all the 48 wards of the Corporation. A judicial commission had been set up to redefine Municipal Corporation seats. Due to the ethnic/political tension, the city of Quetta remained under curfew for several days.

The ideological/political support for contestants remained strong in the elections. To the contrary of the Nawaz Sharif government decision to hold local bodies election on non-party basis, political parties were actively involved in supporting party minded stalwarts under different rubrics. They were more active in urban cities where political parties played an active role by fetching a ready-made support for candidate for District Councils.

The PMAP and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), two major competitors in the Pathan belt, backed numerous candidates for District Councils and Town Committees. It was expected that the JUI would win support from Pathan areas. The elections in two of the populated Pushtu speaking districts: Zhob and Killa Saifulla, where a tough round of polls between the tow was predicted, could not be held because of a strike by the clerical and teaching staff there. Similarly, elections were postponed in Quetta, Gulistan and Pishin district, due to ethnic turmoil. The JUI, unlike PMAP, also mobilizes some voters in some of Balochi/Brahui speaking districts. They included JUI minded Baloch, Pathans living in Baloch areas, and Afghan refugees camped in different Baloch areas. The Afghan refugees, the majority of whom carry national identity cards, came out to support the

JUI in previous elections. Similarly, Pathans living in Baloch nationalist party candidates in the local bodies election voted for JUI supported contestants or other parties such as Peoples' Democratic Alliance (PDA) and IJI.

The Awami National Party (ANP), traditionally a weak political group in Balochistan, failing to secure any seat in the provincial legislature during the 1990 national elections, performed well in Loralai district. The party seems to have the voters' support in Quetta. The PNP, the BNM, and JWP, enjoying support in the Baloch belt and Quetta city, favoured their own candidates and those who had tribal influence in local bodies elections, including the Mayor of Quetta municipal Corporation. The JWP was active in launching its support for candidates, however, at a stage of the election procedure it opposed the Jamali government's elections policies. Running into the last days of the election it demanded the postponement of local bodies elections because of possible riggings in many constituencies in Sibi and Nasir Abad districts. The JWP joined with the BNM and Baloch Students Organization (BSO) to demand the inclusion of 12 new wards and immediate election of Quetta Municipal Corporation. They called for observing a wheel jam strike in Quetta. The PNP, an important group in coalition government, also joined the call for a strike. The JWP seems to have successfully reactivated its political role in the province.

The PDA and IJI had a role to play in the local bodies election. The PDA, besides enjoying fairly good strength of voters in Quetta city, held their support in many Sindhi speaking constituencies. Its supported candidates did well in the May local bodies tiers of Sibi, Bela, Dera Allah Yar and Khuzdar districts. The party met a setback when one of its veterans, Hamza Bugti, got killed in Dera Bugti district on polling day. The IJI is popular in Quetta, Pishin and Loralai districts. The party sought support of many kinsmen in local bodies election, and directed its attention to the

chairmanships.

### Afghan Refugees in Balochistan:

With the United States interest shifted out of Afghanistan, there appeared to be a winding up of the US led allies aid for those Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan. All the leading international agencies and Afghan Refugee Commissioner offices sponsoring aid to the Afghan refugees in Pakistan have gradually reduced their aid programs, with a further reduction expected in the near future, that might bring an end to programmes.

Whatever circumstances, persuasive or forcible, may be involved in the repatriation of the more than two and half million Afghan refugees in Pakistan, one fact, however, remains that to the majority of refugees, repatriation does not come as an easy choice. This is true particularly of Balochistan, where the number of refugees, according to unofficial reports, constitute nearly half of the overall population of the province. Those who live in Balochistan have been doing so for more than a decade years. They have assimilated to their adopted country's culture, and their children have grown up on this land. They are more likely to be looking towards a future in Balochistan than in Afghanistan.

After the NWFP, Balochistan received the largest influx of refugees from Afghanistan. A large number of refugees entering Balochistan during the first years of the war settled at refugee camps by means of the rehabilitation programmes of the United Nation World Food Program (UNWFP), United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nation International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and western aid supported Afghan Refugee Commissioner Office for Balochistan. An even larger number however, who did not register for refugees status, never lived in the camps, and yet they received aid from international



refugee organizations. These people belonged to the upper or middle strata of Afghan society and preferred, for business purposes, to live in the cities.

It is difficult to reckon the exact number of Afghan refugees in Balochistan at present, because no consensus exists. Even the Afghan Refugee Offices lack precise data. According to the Afghan Refugee Commissionerate, the highest number of registered refugees in Balochistan was 704,168, in 1992, and they were divided into 66 camps. It is suspected that the real strength of refugees in Balochistan was much higher than figures collected the refugee offices show. The greater number of camps are situated in Pathan areas. The refugees in the Baloch/Barahvi areas are Persian (known as Dari) speaking people from Tajik, Uzbek and Turkemen tribes. According to official reports, they total 175,000. The government decided to camp the Dari speaking refugee population in the Baloch area because of the similarity of dialect between the Balochi and Dari languages. More resistance was shown to the refugees in Balochi areas than in Pathan areas. Major refugee camps in Baloch areas are Girdi Jungle, Poosti, Okar and Amin Abad. They include, however, Pushto speaking refugees.

The refugee camps in the Pathan areas of Balochistan hold both Dari and Pushto speaking people. The larger number of Pushto speaking people in Balochistan originate from the border tribes of Afghanistan and they include in their number, nomads (Powandas) of Afghanistan who were accustomed to making seasonal trips into Pakistan, in search of grazing pastures for their cattle in spring, and in winter, shelter for themselves from the harsh snows of Afghanistan, were amongst the first to register in Afghan refugee camps. Other than fearing a forcible centralization of their tribe into an organized socialist system, or conscription into the army by the PDPA regime, they were lured into staying by the compensations being offered to Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

All three classes of Afghans were represented in the

refugee block that entered Pakistan. The lower class came from tribal and rural surroundings and the majority of them were uneducated and worked as laborers. The middle classes belonged to urban areas such as Kandahar, Ghazni, Herat, Hazarajat and Kabul. The upper or upper middle classes came from urban cities, particularly Kabul. In Balochistan, the lower class Afghans outnumbered the other classes, and working either as labourers, soil cultivators and cattle raisers, earn more than they did in Afghanistan. As with nearly all immigrants, they work for less money than the local people and this has created differences between the two added to their wages, they also receive refugee benefits. But as was noted earlier, these benefits have dropped markedly, whereas a refugee used to be given blankets, clothes, shoes, sugar, dry-mild and cooking oil, he now receives only 12 kilograms of wheat and few liters of kerosine with a continual decrease that might cease one day. The middle class Afghans run small level restaurants and transport business, own fruit and grocery stores and sell, among other things, rugs, carpets and arms. Their influence on the restaurant and trade business in both the Baloch and Pathan areas is enormous.

The largest section of this class lives in Quetta, Zhob, Loralai, Chaman, Sibi and Kharan. Many of their family members have successfully penetrated into the urban cities of Sindh and Punjab where they run small restaurants, tea-stalls and over shops. Though they lack education, these people have a great deal of business acumen. The upper strata of refugees are very few in number. They saw the Saur revolution as an immediate reversal of their vested interests. Some moved to Quetta, others migrated to the USA, Canada, Germany, U.K., after having first secured refugee asylum. This group invests in the carpet and restaurant business in Quetta and loans money to fellow Afghans in outside Balochistan. As is to be expected, the ratio of education is much higher amongst people of this class.

Afghan refugees in Balochistan constitute a large

portion of the province's total population and have spread to its four corners. For some, a mark of their complete adjustment to their adopted country is that they are national ID card carriers and participate in elections. Those coming from the border areas in Afghanistan are in a position to move around relatively freely and can go and return to their home towns without visas. Children of refugees, who have been born and brought up in Pakistan and see it as home, speak the local languages and study in the same schools as the local children and so the difference between them and the Balochs is minimal. The Afghan people have assimilated remarkably well to their new country and for the majority to them, repatriation to a war dragged homeland with more hardships areas, is for form being a welcome though.

### **Iraqi Refugees in Quetta:**

Quetta, the crowded capital city of Balochistan, besides housing a huge number of Afghan refugees, also contains a rather sizable chunk of Iraqi refugees whose numbers increased during the last three years. In addition to the other myriad problems that the city facing today, growing urbanization and environmental pollution, the Iraqi refugees posed a dilemma of rehabilitation. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Quetta, immediately responsible for their rehabilitation, the total number of Iraqi refugees registered with the office was not more than 3,500 in 1992. However, the unofficial figures were higher as many of them believe to skipped to other cities in Pakistan without coming in the notice of prior knowledge of immigration and UNHCR authorities.

The Iraqi refugees, distinguished by their appearance and traits, shown up on main boulevards and busy corners of the city strolling with hopes and fears without doing and knowing much what fate stores for them. They all claim to have begun fleeing purges to the by the Bahtist regime of Saddam Hussain, to Iran where they were provided asylum in refugee camps. Their movements were limited to the certain areas near the camps and were not free to move around. Not all of these who fled to Iran, as commonly believed, were from Kurdistan, nonetheless, the absolute majority of them were Kurds and came form Kurdistan province of Iraq. The larger number of those seeking refuge in Iran, as one of the Iraqi refugee in Quetta stated, belonged to the middle class of society and had some education. The total number of the Iraqi refugees in Iran is around 60,000, and none of them was willing repatriation back to his homeland until the Saddam regime is over thrown.

The arrival of Iraqi refugees to Pakistan began in 1989 after they, despite the strict surveillance by the Iranian



authorities, managed to escape from camp areas to the towns of Iraqi province of Balochistan-Seistan. It deemed easier to cross the borders inside Pakistan from there through vast plain terrain where usually a handful of border patrols could be bribed or dodged by the owners of convoy transporting them across borders in exchange of handsome amounts. "It was not hard to come in contact with parties smuggling persons across borders," said a middle aged refugee, "provided one paid them the money they demanded." "They knew their ways on both sides to the borders, although sometimes, their maneuvers caused a lot of en route discomfort of sleepless, thirst and fear of arrest. It was possible that in fear of any major raid on them by the border militia, the smugglers had taken flight and left us at fate.

"According to a Pakistani, even at cost of en route fatigues and risks they endured at the hands of border militias, seemed acceptable to these refugees for two reasons. First, viewing from distance once already in refuge, they assumed refugee status in Pakistan by the US and Western countries supported relief agencies for Afghan refugees more alluring them the support they received in Iran. Second, perceiving a belief that Pakistan based international refugee agencies, particularly the UNHCR, United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), would arrange for many of them a refugee status in Europe and North American countries as happened in case of many of educated Afghan families. A hotel owner in Quetta, with whom many Iraqi refugee families rented rooms for last one year, told me that even some of families from Irani Kurdistan pretending to Iraqi refugees undertook all hardships to reach Pakistan under the illusion of securing refugee asylum abroad. Some of the Iraqi refugees forcing their way to Pakistan along with their Persian speaking spouses they married during their stay in Iran also raised an impression of their being Iranians. A large number of them on entering Pakistan were arrested by law enforcing and immigration authorities and remained behind

authorities, managed to escape from camp areas to the towns of Iraqi province of Balochistan-Seistan. It deemed easier to cross the borders inside Pakistan from there through vast plain terrain where usually a handful of border patrols could be bribed or dodged by the owners of convoy transporting them across borders in exchange of handsome amounts. "It was not hard to come in contact with parties smuggling persons across borders," said a middle aged refugee, "provided one paid them the money they demanded." "They knew their ways on both sides to the borders, although sometimes, their maneuvers caused a lot of en route discomfort of sleepless, thirst and fear of arrest. It was possible that in fear of any major raid on them by the border militia, the smugglers had taken flight and left us at fate.

"According to a Pakistani, even at cost of en route fatigues and risks they endured at the hands of border militias, seemed acceptable to these refugees for two reasons. First, viewing from distance once already in refuge, they assumed refugee status in Pakistan by the US and Western countries supported relief agencies for Afghan refugees more alluring them the support they received in Iran. Second, perceiving a belief that Pakistan based international refugee agencies, particularly the UNHCR, United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), would arrange for many of them a refugee status in Europe and North American countries as happened in case of many of educated Afghan families. A hotel owner in Quetta, with whom many Iraqi refugee families rented rooms for last one year, told me that even some of families from Irani Kurdistan pretending to Iraqi refugees undertook all hardships to reach Pakistan under the illusion of securing refugee asylum abroad. Some of the Iraqi refugees forcing their way to Pakistan along with their Persian speaking spouses they married during their stay in Iran also raised an impression of their being Iranians. A large number of them on entering Pakistan were arrested by law enforcing and immigration authorities and remained behind



where they can rejoin the larger community of their brethren they left. The UNHCR office assures a cash of Rs. 5,000 per head and reinstatement of refugee status without any action taken against them by the Iran government in case they show willingness to proceed back to Iran otherwise not much be available in near future as the UNHCR is likely to wind its relief programme, actually initiated for the Afghan refugees in Pakistan. "This all is discouraging and embarrassing to us" said one, "We still prefer to live under the UNHCR mandate than shifting back to Iran, the country we once left." They this way, might want to keep their options open knowing it is not facile. Whatever circumstances they might have in future, the force of Iraqi refugees in Quetta stand the problem of rehabilitation at present. Unlike the Afghan refugees, they show less socio-cultural affinities with the resident population. The language gap remain a they lack essential knowledge of English and Urdu, and their native tongues: Arabic and Kurdish are foreign to a majority of people in Pakistan. Those who have learnt Persian speaking people in Quetta. They stand financial hardships with the amount they receive in a expensive city like Quetta is, even to raise basic necessities of life. Many of the families staged protests in past months in front of the main UNHCR office for a raise in refugee allowances or send them abroad. They are force to live in Quetta and under the UNHCR mandate are not allowed to accept any job or run business, other than the act that not much is left for them in a city already haunted by huge crowds of Afghan refugees, causing many economic and social hardships for local population. However, if they are allowed job opportunities, at least it can keep majority of the male population doing something than remaining idle whole of time.

In case of any suspension of financial support for the Iraqi refugees by the UNHCR, they will lose a tailor-made support to keep the pot boiling and may be prone to many social pitfalls. The government to Pakistan, not financing any

where they can rejoin the larger community of their brethren they left. The UNHCR office assures a cash of Rs. 5,000 per head and reinstatement of refugee status without any action taken against them by the Iran government in case they show willingness to proceed back to Iran otherwise not much be available in near future as the UNHCR is likely to wind its relief programme, actually initiated for the Afghan refugees in Pakistan. "This all is discouraging and embarrassing to us" said one, "We still prefer to live under the UNHCR mandate than shifting back to Iran, the country we once left." They this way, might want to keep their options open knowing it is not facile. Whatever circumstances they might have in future, the force of Iraqi refugees in Quetta stand the problem of rehabilitation at present. Unlike the Afghan refugees, they show less socio-cultural affinities with the resident population. The language gap remain a they lack essential knowledge of English and Urdu, and their native tongues: Arabic and Kurdish are foreign to a majority of people in Pakistan. Those who have learnt Persian speaking people in Quetta. They stand financial hardships with the amount they receive in a expensive city like Quetta is, even to raise basic necessities of life. Many of the families staged protests in past months in front of the main UNHCR office for a raise in refugee allowances or send them abroad. They are force to live in Quetta and under the UNHCR mandate are not allowed to accept any job or run business, other than the act that not much is left for them in a city already haunted by huge crowds of Afghan refugees, causing many economic and social hardships for local population. However, if they are allowed job opportunities, at least it can keep majority of the male population doing something than remaining idle whole of time.

In case of any suspension of financial support for the Iraqi refugees by the UNHCR, they will lose a tailor-made support to keep the pot boiling and may be prone to many social pitfalls. The government to Pakistan, not financing any



relief programme for the Iraqi refugees, mostly allowed them to stay in because of the UNHCR directives. However, their presence, in case the withdraw their support, might make them dependent on government for fulfilling many requirements of life without any possible repatriation. The UNHCR being not very supportive of their demands or concessions lest no more Iran based Iraqi refugees follow their foot steps, is still concerned with some of their basic problems, particularly education of their children and undirected life of their youths. Recently, in Quetta, the UNHCR opened an elementary school for the education of Iraqi children with some expenses shared by other international relief organization, and hoping to run vocational centers for adults.

## Zikris in Balochistan

The Zikri question has become one of the leading issues during last few years which mobilized enormous resistance by the religious groups, particularly the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), in Balochistan. Not only on the floor of the Assembly and important political forums a criticism was raised against the community about their religious beliefs, but followed street processions in many coastal areas where Zikri population exists, resulting in often law and order situation for the administration. Demands were made against the Zikris that they be declared a religious minority by the government as they follow a religious code, which is contrary to the fundamentals of Islam. There were many cases of violence against Zikris where a loss to their property was made.

Counting the pros and cons of the issue which fanned the controversy, religious and political factors were mainly accountable for the opposition. The Zikri community associates themselves with Mehdivi movement which began in 1483 by Syed Mohammad Joneri (1443-1504), a renowned and charismatic scholar who traveled in different parts of Asia and claimed himself a "Mehdi". He believed to have left thousand followers all over he travelled. One of them was Mullah Mohammad who travelled from Arabia to Mekran and founded Zikri movement. Mullah Mohammad was accompanied by many of his followers and family members whose shrines are in Turbat and coastal areas around. After the death of Mullah Mohammad, one of his disciples, Mian Abdulla, strengthened the movement by inducing his thought amongst people of the area.

Since the focus of Zikri way of worship was on "Zikr" (reciting), therefore, they came to be known as Zikris. The Zikri community lives in different parts of coastal area, such as Pasni, Gowadar, Omara and Jewani, nonetheless, majority of them live in Turbat Mekran division. A number of

Zikries live in Karachi. An exact number of them may not be known as no separate census about the community is available, however, they, according to an estimation, constitute 120,000 all over. According to 1929 report, the number of Zikris in Mekran were 26,000. In Mekran, they roughly stand a population of 40,000 to 50,000. A large number of them migrating from Mekran settled down in other coastal towns around. Turbat is the center of Zikris where their holy place, "Koh Murad" (hill of hope/fulfillment) exists. Each year Zikris from all over pilgrim to Koh Murad. They spend a day or two doing Zikr. The annual congregation of Zikris is on 27th of Ramazan where whole night is spent doing Zikr, however, according to one, the pilgrimage to Koh Murad can be made any time in a year. The place has religious significance for Zikris as it holds many shrines but a chosen place where anyone visiting and doing Zikr can fulfill his desire and spiritual purification and exaltation.

Zikris follow a separate line of religious action. They, instead of regular prayers, do Zikr. They sit in circles where one person, usually the Mullah or senior Zikri, leads the Zikr from Quran with a praise to God almighty. The Zikr mostly highlights the greatness of God. Males and females have separate gatherings of Zikr. Females participation in Zikr is active. They believe in Quran as the only guide for mankind and finality of prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), but believe that "Mehdi", who will be the savior of Zikris on the day of judgment, will appear on earth in future. They differ about fasting. Zikries don't fast in the month of Ramazan, though they spend most of time in doing Zikr. They rather fast for 10 days before Eid Azha (sacrifice). Similarly, they don't pilgrim to Mecca like common Muslims, and make annual pilgrim to Koh Murad. Zikries are predominantly business oriented and have rich business standing in Mekran and other coastal areas with licenses of import and export. The coastal areas rich for smuggling items from Gulf countries to local markets have raised their business profile.

They own launches and markets and hold important business in the area.

The ratio of education amongst Zikris, particularly females, is negligible. They are less inclined towards government services a factor responsible for not having any notable participation in public offices. The young generation, however, as a Zikri educationist told, are more inclined towards education. Many of them have travelled to Karachi and have got admission in colleges and university.

The resistance to Zikris involves religious factor where JUI was more active, especially during their participation in government. The opposition to Zikris actually began during Nawab Bugti government 1988-90 where JUI was a strong coalition partner. Counting the religious ground that they follow a different approach to Islam that violates its sacredness, the JUI labels them non-Muslim. The Nawabs got, however, ignored the JUI stunt and stopped them from any street mobilization that could pose a threat to their lives and property. The stunt against Zikries entails political orientation where JUI interests can be served after they are declared a minority.

The JUI which was traditionally a weak political party in Mekran division, gained political support in 1988 elections. The Zikris voted in all against JUI candidates. The JUI blamed them for financing opposite parties candidates in all elections, including the Local bodies elections. Zikries voted for the Pakistan National Party (PNP) candidate. Similarly, in 1990, PNP candidate, from Mekran constituency was supported by Zikries. The JUI leadership is believed to have been embarrassed by the active participation of Zikries against the party in all elections. The young Zikries are supporting Balochistan National Movement (BNM) and Baloch Students Organization (BSO). A fact, however, remains that Zikries show little interest in politics. The Zikries' support for these parties, nevertheless, comes mostly because of the policies of PNP and BNM/BSO which support



secularism with a right of existence for all indigenous people in Balochistan. These parties have supported Zikries against the ongoing opposition to declare them minority. The Zikris, indigenous to Baloch coastal areas, claim their ethnic background as Baloch. They speak local languages which include Mekrani and Barahvi. The Zikries are indigenous to Balochistan as majority of them have lived in for centuries and established businesses. The Zikries have adapted a separate code of religion which is a drift from the fundamentals of Islam. The practicing of their religion, as many sociologists/anthropologists agree, have not caused any serious undermining of religious sentiments. The community has shown peaceful co-existence without involving much in state affairs.

## ZHOB: A Fascinating Border Town of Balochistan

"Ladies and gentlemen, in few minutes, inshalla, we will be landing at Zhob airport, where ground temperature is 7 centigrade. The passengers are requested to fasten their seat belts." The announcement of hostess sounded a relief to many of Fokkar's passengers whose stamina for any further journey appeared no more with air-pockets, one usually comes across while flying over the top of Suliman mountain range above a height of 13,000 ft. from D.I.Khan in route. The plane, lowering down slowly in narrow terrain above furlongs stretched grapes orchards with green lathy vines, touched runway of a tiny airport "whose only visibility from distance in an early morning mist in winter is its Civil Aviation Control tower," said a co-pilot.

It is a few minutes ride more in a vehicle to reach one of the oldest and fascinating towns of Balochistan, Zhob. Zhob is a provincially tribal administered agency (PATA) cum district in the north-west of Quetta at road distance of 333 k.ms. It is flanked in the west by Afghanistan province of Khair Kot which borders near Gulkach and Qamar-din-Karaz, and in north by the NWFP. The road links to NWFP are through Waziristan and Dana Shar. The Dana Shar road is not open to traffic during rainy seasons as it becomes impassable due to its worse conditions. Traffic even through Waziristan is restricted under a situation where tribal enmity among tribes, mostly between Mandokhels and Sulimankhels tribes, erupts and leads to armed clashes closer to the areas where road passes.

Zhob, in older days, was a small village called "Apozai" named after an ancient tribe. Not much is known about the early history of Zhob, however, it is believed to be under the control of Yousifzaies chieftains during the Mughal



rule in India. In 1780, Mandokhels and Abdulzais tribes from surroundings united and attacked Yousafzais, and succeeded driving them out to northern frontier areas. The Mandokhels became the dominant tribe in Zhob and its surroundings. It remained under their control until 1889 after the British captured it and raised it an agency like other agencies of Quetta, Chagi and Sibi which formed the main cities of British Balochistan in 1886. Its name was changed to Fort Sandeman, named after Sir Robert Sandeman, the first Agent to Governor General in Balochistan. Sandeman, like Napier and John Jacob of Sind, played a front role in raising British control in Balochistan. It was in 1975 that its name was once again changed to Zhob. Zhob is the name of the river flowing all along the valley from south to north. The absolute majority of Zhob population is Pashtu speaking. They are divided into different tribes. The leading tribes of Zhob are: Mandokhels, Sheranies, Kakars and Sulimankhels.

Zhob may not be very big town, nonetheless, from Balochistan standard, it is a major city. Its population, according to the 1981 census, was 60,000, however, it has increased like many cities of Balochistan after the influx of a great number of Afghan refugees and their settlement in the areas. The Zhob city is stretched over four square k.m. with an elevation of 4,790 fts above sea level where blowing of strong winds in winter, natives call it "Siberian winds" often drop minimum temperature to Zero. Winters are usually dry and windy with no much rain or snow. Summers are cool with average rain of 17 inches per season during the monsoon.

During the British days, Zhob was raised as a garrison town like other towns in Balochistan, a factor responsible for its rail and road development, like other towns in Balochistan and NWFP to support their Forward Policy. The narrow gauged rail track which linked Zhob with Quetta and Chamman was abandoned by Pakistan Railways in 1985. The Zhob cantonment where now a full-fledged army brigade

stands, was initially erected to station a fleet of the Royal Air Force. The officers' huts, messes, and troops barracks, majority of them constructed during 1886 to 1900, appear the remnants of British heyday in India. A cemetery outside the cantonment having slabs of marbles, many of them have been broken and stolen, reminds a visitor the services of British officers who died thousands miles far from their homeland for the elevation of Great Raj. One of the graves is of Major Robert, the British Political Agent of Zhob, who was killed by Pale Khan. The Pale Khan Kosti was a famous outlaw of Zhob who posed a major threat to the British administration in Zhob and Loralai. He killed many British officers and native troops, and looted convoys. Pale Khan, on whose heroic life a PTV serial and an Indian movie bases on, was regarded a Robin Hood who helped poor and harassed rich/cruel people. He had developed bitter hostility to British. Many ballads even today sing of his bravery.

Two of the buildings which impress any new comer to Zhob of the grandeur of the British monuments are Zhob Militia (ZM) Mess and the Castle, the residence and office of the Political Agent, Zhob. The ZM's, one of the oldest border corps, was raised in 1890. The ZM's, now the part of Balochistan Frontier Corps, centenary was celebrated in 1990. The mess, situated on a hillock, makes inside a number of historical records of ZM and souvenirs with many of hand made portraits of its officers killed in action since 1947, a tribute to their courageous. An album contains the photos and autographs of civil and military VIPs who visited Zhob on an official of shooting trips.

The castle or PA House is the largest architecture built on the hillock which splendor, according to the Balochistan government reports, is next to the Governor House in Quetta. This Victorian style castle contains, less or more, 20 rooms with a big spacious hall having wooden floor, which was once the important dancing and social gathering corner for the British officers and their spouses in Zhob. "We



could see many officers and their families going to the castle at distance, "said a 77 old resident of Zhob. "An Indian (native) had no permission, except office hours, to even go near the bottom of hillock where the castle was. "According to the Political Agent Zhob, Mr. Zafar Qadir, the building is an old monument, and serves a historical importance. It requires a lot of repair-expenses every year to keep its splendor. "For any Political Agent's needs, at least for me," said he, "this is too big. One feels a lot of aloneness to live in this monument if not accompanied by big group of persons. "The P.A office receives hundreds of visitors everyday who visit the PA for their problems.

The bazaar area of Zhob is in the heart of the city where all days of week people start crowding around from dawn to dust. "Majority of shoppers" said a gray haired shop-keeper, "come from surrounding villages to buy and sell, and go back." Having spacious streets and open lanes, the Zhob bazaar construction was designed in 1920s. includes many items of day to day life necessities to buy. It ranges from local made hand rugs to smuggled electronic items, tin foods, blankets, Iranian dry fruits, and many items for sale not on open show but in underground. "Zhob is situated on borders, and like many border towns in Balochistan, smuggling across borders is frequent," said the FC office at Zhob. "Goods including arms, are dumped in villages across borders in Afghanistan, and whenever opportunities exist, they are smuggled in by those who are professional and affluentials." Both sides of bazaar, there are two-storey buildings with balconies from where one can have a better view of bazaar life. Many of them were constructed before partition. In the end of main bazaar, there are two markets, "William Fruit and Vegetable, and William Meat Market" named after the British Political Agent, Grant Brut William. The famous timber market of Zhob is in the end of city. The timber business existed even before the partition of sub-continent. Timbers were brought, as it is still existing, from

forests in Afghanistan and were transported to different parts of the country. "It is a million Rs. business." said a contractor in Zhob, "Timbers have great importance all over the country for construction purpose".

One of the features of Zhob is the two year old established Grammar School Zhob. Zhob, educationally is a backward district. Till very recent, the literacy rate was 2% in case of males and 0.2% in females. Major steps, nonetheless, have been adopted to promote the cause of education. The schools have existed, but they lack advancement of educations. The founding of Zhob Grammar School is a major step towards the pormotion of education in Zhob area. The school has its own computer lab where computer learning becomes compulsory for students from class six.. According to a college lecturer at Zhob, the area has lagged behind in education, the Grammar school and a Girls College, under construction will raise the cause of education in large .He belived that area was left behind in education because of the conservative values that withstood modern education, particularly in case of females, however, a change is in offing. The parents have realized sending their children to schools "

Zhob is an interesting place to visit. It remains a place of trill and excitment for majority of the incoming visitors from outside. The life style of city which has undergone changes with time, still has a lot of mixture of urban versus rural and city ver village .



## Chapter 20 The Way of Powandas

One, without knowing much about their life, must have seen a caravan of people traveling on foot or camelback, carrying all their luggage, from one place to another in different parts of the country. They, wearing long heavy clothes where females with dark-red dyed frock and men with their big turbans are distinct from distance, are famous nomad tribes, known as "Powandas". The Powanda means wanderer or without a permanent home. The Powandas are famous for their nomadic life through out central Asia. Powandas originated in Afghanistan, later on, through transaction, many of clans adapted their migrations within Pakistan. They both, since 1947, are common in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The live under permanent migration from cold to warm areas in winter, and from warm to cold areas in summer. An exact number of Powandas population may not be known as no census exists that can reveal their number, nonetheless, as some surveys show, it ranges from 250,000 to 300,000. Their number is believed to have increased rapidly after Afghan revolution in 1978 which forced a large section of Afghan population, including nomad tribes who feared the forcible conscription by the PDPA regime into Afghan militia, fled the country for refugee status in Pakistan. According to the Pakistan census commission report, there are two kinds of nomads: Afghan and Pakistani nomads. Nonetheless, because of the deep cultural-lingual similarities between the two, it is hard to distinguish between the two. They wear a similarlike dresses and speak a common language without any significant difference of dialect. According to another survey, majority of nomads, actually belonging to Afghanistan, claim Pakistani based Powandas because of fear of law and order agencies.

Powandas lead a different but a tough life-style which to many anthropologists, is adapted to support the amenities of life they are immured in. They travel long journeys during

migration on foot. "The camels/mules carrying luggage may provide a ride to children, old or sick, however, for a young Powanda, it is aberrant to ride," said a Powanda. He bragged of once traveling with a caravan from Ghazni in Afghanistan to Sheikarpur in Sind and back. He covered all the distance on foot. He, nevertheless, cleaning up his wrinkled forehead of dirt, agreed to old-age factor that thwarts his will for such a long journey on foot.

Being tough to different herds of life, they are still less tolerant of extreme harshness of weather both in winter and summer, though they appear less disturbed by cold winters than hot summers. "We are perturbed by extremeness of weather as we live in tents. It is awful to live in tents during summer in plain areas and during winter in high altitude areas," said an old Powanda. He, however, nodded to the fact that during winter, resulting of the shortage of pasture due to snows threatens cattle-raising, and they move to summer habitats in Punjab, Sind and even NWFP with a possibility of plenty of pasture to graze our cattle. "We pitch our camps near water-sources, preferably a canal or stream," said another Powanda.

Powandas migration was commonly observed in India, Iran and central Asian states. An anthropological approach to their life-style shows a variety of norms different from other people. Absolute majority of Powandas are Pushto speaking, many of them speak or understand Dari (a version of Persian) too. They have a strong sense of group homogeneity with a little acceptance of relationship outside their clan. Powandas may claim to whatever tribe, as many of them did in a bit to get I.D or refugee status, the range of relationship recognition is not beyond third cousinship. A Powanda family, usually comprising of uncles, cousins, and in-laws, with a male of oldest age as their clan chief, range from 30 to 70 persons. A possibility may arise that different clans camp together under security or jobs availability circumstances, nonetheless, the togetherness cannot wither



away the division of relationship. A partition exist within the camp area for keeping distance among opposite sexes. They are more committed to family rigidity to cross the family limits for outside clan marriages easily.

Intermarriages within a clan are common among Powandas. "The marriages are arranged without conceding much consent from female side," believed an anthropologist, "as male chauvinism is dominating amongst Powandas." "The intermarriages support Powandas' group homogeneity in larger way," a female Powanda said, "A lad can be lost if he is married outside clan, particularly when his wife clan is stronger," she later on added, "who will marry our girls. An outsider may not be willing to join our camp." Females constitute an important component of Powanda society. Powanda women sturdy and tough. Besides doing much of house-work, they graze outside and fetch heavy loads of water. They facing the toughness of life support their men on all fronts of life. According to a Levy officer, during an armed encounter between dacoits and powanda near Balochistan-Sind border, after the dacoits attacked the Powandas camps one night, females showed an equal courage of reversing attack. The encounter left two Powandas dead, including a woman with an old style rifle in her blood-dyed hands; four casualties were on other side.

The girls are married in young ages from 14 to 18 years. Those unmarried virgins are distinct from once change in dress wearing. They always white "shalwar". A "khal" small tattoo is put on her face after she is engaged. Before marriage, she is under a restriction not to speak with his fiance or take his name in public. It is an occasion of great jubilation for Powandas when a marriage takes place. The girls, dancing in circles and singing ballads and songs, appear a show hopping on and off to a stranger from distance.

The Powandas lack any literacy or familiarity with growing modernity of life. The literacy rate among Powandas is zero. They may travel in different corners, yet imbibe less

that can change their norms of life. "Economic and social stratification," agreed on sociologist, "can their Powanda status." The number of Powandas, during the last many decades has been dramatically reduced. Many tribes in Afghanistan, abode of Powandas, and Pakistan have ceased migration by settling down in different towns, where now they are engaged in farm and trade business. Many leading Pathan tribes in Balochistan and NWFP, such as, Nasir, Kundi, Noorzais, Marwat and Niazi were, centuries back, Powandas. Those who have made enough earning by hard-labor as daily wage or sheep raiser, as majority of Powandas do after they migrate to different cities, and have bought any immovable property, a gradual change in their life-style started. This is experienced during last decade after thousands of Powandas given Afghan refugee benefits and were restricted not to migrate. They were less inclined to migrate and supported a settled life in mud-made houses. Their children now go to local schools/mukhtabs, and denounce themselves as Powandas. If provided fair opportunities of education and employment, they may in future be a responsible member of regular society, no matter being tamed than their Powanda parents who lacked all basic facilities of life a citizen can be entitled to. Powandas lead a different life-style. The majority of them, being hard-working and haughty to all hardship of life are not exposed to settled life. Few of them may be exposed to modernity of life, however, they lack opportunities to adapt it. Those having gone any economic and social stratification show little inclinations to drift from a nomad to civic life.



## Jirga System in Balochistan

### Chapter 21

The Jirga is a traditional system of justice which has actively been practiced in Balochistan to settle legal cases and disputes where law and order situation was posed a threat. The Jirga system, which had existed since the British period, was modified under the Special Provision Ordinance (Criminal Provisions 11) of 1968 to make it more convenient for justice. Under the new rules, the Deputy Commissioner/Political Agent can appoint a tribunal on Jirga pattern, presided by a Tehsildar to probe into the facts, and report to the concerned authorities. The forming of tribunals, however, is not common as it was under the Jirga system. Before it had existed under the Frontier Crimes Regulations (FCRs) with more considerations by the District/Agency administration to the Jirga proposals. The FCRs, still in function in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), had made the administration more accountable in Jirga forming and following its recommendation. Though some FCRs were aberrant, as under them, the Agency administration could book any person without forming a Jirga for three years on charges of anti-state activities without any right of appeal, nonetheless, not those where Jirga forming was required.

Under the Jirga regulations in Balochistan, the Deputy Commissioners/Political Agents, could order to frame a jirga to probe into a matter and give its recommendations to the authority in any case falling under the Pakistan Penal Code. It included from a petty theft case to a murder case, though in majority cases, the forming of Jirga was required where cases had importance or involvement of major offenses. In Balochistan, as a survey of cases show where the services of Jirgas were sought by the District Administration, Jirgas were usually framed in to settle cases of major offense such as kidnapping, big theft or murder where the administration believed a threat to the law and order situation from. The composition of a Jirga was four notables about parties involved

agree upon, nonetheless, in some cases, the number of Jirga members could be bigger. "The parties involved might have raised objection regarding a member's impartiality," said a District Magistrate, "however, in most cases, the people appointed for Jirga purpose were not objected." Such Jirgas had legal existence, and any suggestion/recommendation forwarded by them, had a legal status. The District Magistrate, or Sub-District Magistrate, commonly exercising on the behalf of District Magistrates in non-murder cases, followed the Jirga's recommendation regarding an offense. "The Jirga could fix different punishments, such as imprisonment, fines, ransom, exile, for the offender, but not death penalty," said he. To him, under the Jirga system, the accused could have all punishments but not capital one. Jirga could suggest punishment of exile for someone guilty of an offense. This was common in Baloch/Brauhi area where a person put to exile as to leave his area for the rest of his leave or for a certain period defined by Jirga. The Jirga could fix penalty for someone of marrying his family's girls (daughter/sister) to other tribe's men. This was common in Pathan areas as a compensation for aggression, mostly in murder cases or tribal rivalry, committed by one side against another.

Jirga can have a non-legal or extra existence to deal with an important issue which one way or another threatens the law and order situation in an area. Such Jirgas are practiced in Balochistan. They are not necessarily only formed by the District Magistrate; they may be formed by government. The Jirgas are given legal covering if it reaches a decision/settlement, and agreed by the parties concerned. Such a Jirga can consist of larger and more influential members from both sides. The members of Jirga can belong to the parties concerned or can be nominated from outside. "However, these are parties to nominate or suggest the names of people," said an old tribal person who participated in many important Jirgas. To him, if members of Jirga are suggested by government, even then parties have to agree upon it.



Jirgas are framed by the government or parties involved in a dispute can request the government to form a Jirga for them so that their dispute can have a settlement. In Balochistan, many old tribal and ethnic disputes are settled through Jirgas efforts, though in many cases they have failed upon bringing any compromise between parties to a dispute. The practice of Jirgas is strongly rooted. For example, following the ethnic riots in Balochistan in 1990 between Baloch and Pathan, resulting into many casualties and huge business loss, a Jirga from both sides was framed by the government which consisted of important notable chiefs and members of Balochistan Cabinet. Though the Jirga failed to reach a final compromise, however, it focused on important factors that were ultimately accountable for the issue, and cooled down the tension. Similarly, over the famous tribal feud between Sulimankhels and Mandokhels which claimed more than a hundred of lives and huge property loss for more than half of centuries in the Zhob district, Jirga efforts were commendable to mobilize the tribes towards a settlement. Jirgas were active in making possible efforts to reach an agreement over the tribal disputes between Hameedzais and Ghaibzais factions of Achakzai tribe in Gulistan area, which has posed a major threat to the provincial and federal law and order enforcing agencies in the province. But it, however, failed to reach a compromise between the parties. A settlement is needed, which, as widely speculated, can better be stipulated by mutual arbitration of the tribes concerned through tribal jirgas. The both tribes have important geo-strategic locations near the Afghan borders.

Jirgas have played its role in many important cases of kidnappings across borders where the government option of forcible action or bargaining seemed ineffective. It is frequent in tribal disputes in Balochistan where law and order enforcing agencies are less effect in situation when culprits run across the border to Afghanistan. The famous kidnapping of 30 government officials by a rival tribesmen from the Qamar-din-

Qaraz in Zhob area in 1992 was facilitated by the Jirga efforts to recover them back across the borders in Afghanistan.

Jirga is/was a traditional way of settling disputes which functioned in tribal societies of Balochistan and NWFP. In Balochistan, nonetheless, it remained as an active source of judicial adjudication. "Jirga" as a person from Jirga background said, "is based on exploiting and using local/tribal values in settling all kind of cases which is usually more respectable than law or legal judgment." To him, it is commonly observed that cases decided in Jirga were more acceptable to parties involved than they were dealt in courts. In majority of murder cases, in both Pathan and Baloch societies, decided by judicial courts it was observed that enmity did not end though the culprit was imprisoned or even hanged, a chain of murders followed. Nevertheless, in cases decided by Jirga, hatred and grievances between the two was mitigated. "Jirgas" according to a lawyer, "made the parties more accountable to the acceptance of decision as it involves arbitration by noblemen". To him, witnesses involved in Jirga were usually based on goodwill, and cases are tried to decide even when no immediate witness is available. The Jirga people can interview a person, believed to be a witness and does not want to be a witness otherwise, and confirm the witness's whereabouts through area people. According to the Pakistan Evidence Act, the Jirga provide all chance to a witness, and his/her statement has importance. However, to an area notable, the Jirga decision is not all based on evidence. The opinion of the members of Jirga account more. Jirga source of settling disputes had played a role in providing justice to people. The system seems in less existence today, it was replaced with tribunal system, than it was before, mostly because of the fact that growing modernization and advancement of life which had made the system less effective because of its requirements. The important role played in Jirga was the influence of members having a respect and impartiality in matters, and who believed in settling a dispute for the collective good of society. It appeared true of people joining a Jirga.



Similarly, the District Administration was less inclined to Jirga because of the growing crimes rate and volatile interests. "There are courts everywhere," said a Sub-District magistrate who had spent 35 years of service in many areas of Balochistan. "They are better to punish them as we have enough to do with other affairs of life." To him, Jirga was based on value system where any body committing a crime was condemned in large, today many of them are professionals without having any respect for tribal code of life. To him, government was less inclined to the adaption of Jirga, and was eager to its replacement with overall judicial system. "A form of Jirga in important cases/disputes must be encouraged and patronized" agreed he.

## PAPER: An Oasis of Literacy

The PAPER (Pakistan Academy for the Promotion of Education and Research) appears to have devoted to the promotion of the cause of literacy in Balochistan, the province which has long been stricken by the problem of insufficient schooling and education. Balochistan, the largest of the all provinces with highest growth rate, has the lowest rate of education which accounts 11% of the Pakistan overall 26% literacy rate. The larger percentage of these literates belong to the urban strata of society and the figures of literates in rural areas are considerably low. Out of many factors accounting for the lowest literacy rate, the lack of sufficient schooling and non-availability of teachers, particularly in rural areas where now PAPER focuses on the improvment of education, was the major factor for the lowest ratio of literacy in Balochistan.

The PAPER is an autonomous body designed to promote high quality basic education in the under privileged areas of the country. It initiated its programme from Balochistan where different projects are currently underway to raise its cause of the promotion of education in various places of the province. The PAPER was organized by a group of civil servants and educationists where many others supporting the cause of education have joined it. The major financial and moral support to its cause was offered by the government, political elites of the province and private organizations. It was agreed upon the PAPER agenda that a chain of schools from lower classes to upper be started in those towns/districts of Balochsitan where schooling facilities are negligible. The establishing of Grammar schools is the credit the PAPER achieves towards the promotion of its aim. So far, it has opened five Grammar schools in far-flanged areas of Balochistan. The aeas, the schools are opened, are in



dire need of schooling facilities. They are Kholu, Zhob, Muslim Bagh, Loralai and Qila Saifullah. The PAPER is planning to open other schools in other remote areas which may become possible in next one or two years.

At present, the PAPER Grammar School System has an approximate enrollment of 1,300 students, majority of them belong to the lower, and middle strata of society with not enough encouragement for education in past. The faculty consists of above 90 highly paid professional lady teachers selected from all over the country on open merit. They are offered BPS 16 to 18 depending on their education and teaching/research experience. The teachers are provided possible facilitated accommodation within a premise without any charges, and protection by the district/agency administration. "Their security is the responsibility of district administration," said a teacher of Muslim Bagh Grammar School from Karachi. Every school is provided a vehicle by the district administration through district funds. School building areas, and residential areas for staff is acquired through the kind courtesy of the field officers of the civil service posted in these areas. According to the PAPER sources, the major funding sources are the provincial government grants, development grants from the Senators and MPAs of the area. It included donations from the local population interested in the promotion of programs.

The PAPER Grammar School System because of the efficiency and advanced teaching/learning methods has gained reputation and is popular amongst area people. It lays great emphasis on teaching of the languages: English, Urdu and Arabic, Logic (science, Mathematics and computer science), and Religion (holy Quran). The medium of instruction is English. The teaching of Quran is compulsory from class 1; and computer skills, added to curriculum as compulsory subject, begin from class 4. All the Grammar schools are equipped with a computer center, science lab, audio-video lab, art gallery and library. Similarly, it is planned that

students be taught typing skills in class IX. A parent from Qila Saifulla whose two children, son and a daughter, are being educated at the Grammar School, when asked about his viewpoint about the school system, he said. "Grammar Schools are really good as far as upgradation of schooling system in a remote town is concerned. I wish such a system of schooling was initiated long before lest majority of our generation were educated well".

"The PAPER Grammar Schooling System appears a big step towards introduction of advanced schooling in backward areas with facilitation to local population to meet the demand for children's education," said a District Education officer at Zhob. To him, it, unlike other English-medium schools opened in major cities of Pakistan, provide all advanced techniques a student needs at lower or middle level without much expenses. The monthly fee for each student is reasonably low and can be afforded by low income people. "I pay 200 per month for my son," said the upper clerk of Kohlu agency office, "but the education he receives is like an advanced English medium school." Asked by whether this money is not a drain on his monthly income. "Not at all," said he. "I am planning to educate my daughter in the school. Their future is my future, so what if I spare a 400 per month for their future." The expenses paid for required texts and uniforms are however other than that paid once a year. "The books to the students", said a teacher "are still sold at rebate rates. "This is bearable for majority lower and middle class people to educate their sons. Since the PAPER Grammar School System offers co-education and majority of teachers are female, therefore, they fetch a number of girls admissions. The female ratio of students in each class in all schools is considerably high. To one of the PAPER spokesman, the appointment of female teachers, all of them holding Masters' in different subjects, attracts female admission in Pushto and Balochi speaking areas where the roots of tribalism are stronger with a higher sense of male chauvinism." In



Balochistan the female education is ignored from the beginning and not much encouragement to further female education was shown in past," said a social worker in UN from Balochistan. "This will boost their cause of education," agreed she. According to the government of Balochistan census, the female ratio of literacy is 2.4%; this is below 1% in rural areas where Grammar schools function. Similarly, another retired educationist from Balochistan and activist in PAPER programme was hopeful of the future progress the PAPER can do. "The removal of illiteracy begins at schools, and advancement of good education a student may need throughout his/her career starts with a good schooling system," said he. To him, such affords are praiseworthy and are a service of humanity. The PAPER owns credit for establishing of a Girls college at Zhob, the major credit of which goes to the then Political Agent, Mr Zafar Qadir, a pioneer of PAPER School System. He during four years of service at Kohlu and Zhob as District Magistrate rendered enormous service to the promotion of school system. The need for a school grew during past many years, nonetheless, there was opposition from some circles who represented the interests of fundamentalist political groups to its opening. Consequently, it is planning to open female schools for girls in the very remote areas of Balochistan, like Surab, Wad, Gidar with the collaboration of Balochistan government. These three schools, according to a survey by the UNICEF office, are believed to secure more than 500 female students admission in only one year of its opening.

The PAPER plans to open intermediate level colleges, and later to degree level, when any of the PAPER launched Grammar schools complete their 10th class session. The Kholu and Zhob Grammar school which started functioning in 1989 and 1990 simultaneously will produce first batch of students for college in 1994. "Students from Grammar Schools will be given priority in PAPER Grammar colleges as they will contain those students who passed matriculation

from Grammar schools, nonetheless, students from other cadres will be afforded privilege of admission provided they qualify entrance test for left seats," said a PAPER man. The system to him can grow well in future meeting the necessities of secondary education. PAPER appears a major step towards the promotion of education in the rural areas of Balochistan where people found a common problem of schooling. The entrenched rural setup with not much encouragement shown to the promotion of education in past now finds a mobilization for the advancement of school system under PAPER. In few years of its existence, it has made strides by opening five schools with sufficient teaching/learning requirements and others necessities for an upgraded schooling system.



### Chapter 23

## **Handicrafts in Balochistan**

Balochistan is famous for handicrafts skills where a variety of colourful handicrafts in embroidery and needlework are designed in different areas, and sold like hot cakes all over the country in expensive boutiques and handicrafts' showrooms. A bulk of them are exported to western countries for sale in exhibitions and oriental stores.

The art of handicrafts in Balochistan has survived since old ages without undergoing any scientific and industrial advancement. Neither government nor any NGOs has shown any major encouragement to support a regular benefit and wage system for those who craft them after big labour and concentration.

The handicraft work is common in the rural areas of Balochistan, particularly the Baloch/Brahui areas, where females having learnt the handicraft skills are actively engaged in sewing them to raise a livelihood for their families. According to one lady who is running her boutique in Quetta and Karachi, and has visited different areas of Balochistan to find business pursuits, "The handicraft skills are ancestral in Balochistan having passed from generation to generation. All who do it are rural females with more family liabilities." To her, embroidering is a part-time job for majority of females from that class. They do needlework after they are done with managing the affairs of household. Also, the absolute majority of those engaged in embroidering are females without or little education. According to a UN literacy survey in rural areas, those who have received education were less inclined to learning embroidering. They when interviewed, showed the learning of embroidery skills a necessity of choice because of not having any education. According to a female, "I wish I had enough schooling to avoid this tiresome embroidering."

The educated females can earn handsome salary by serving as school teachers in any girls school." According to the reports, females in areas with lowest literacy rate, as common in Balochistan, were more inclined to embroidery. They, belonging to the lower class of society, live under poverty, and for them making money on embroidery skills is a real bonus in life. Females from all age are engaged in doing embroidery skills, however, majority of them belong to young age. She, however, agreed that majority of those who were good in embroidering belonged to the middle age. They learned the stitch-work when they were young, and had been doing it for years.

The learning of embroidery is formal for majority of them as they don't undergo any specific training for that, nonetheless, it needs special skills to do it properly. According to Gul Bibi, who has been embroidering for the last thirty years and is famous for her finest needlework, "I learned when I was only thirteen. I belonged to a poor family, and like other girls from our same class, was forced to learn the skills to support my family." She is believed to have sewn thousands of embroidery works to be sold in market. She now at the age of forty-three can embroider different designs, however, because of continual embroidering, her eye-sight had become weak, and she found it difficult to carry on the work for longer time. "The embroidery involves a lot of eye-sight work as one has to concentrate all on stitching without losing a trace, otherwise it can spoil the work. The important thing in needlework is cleanness and sophistication of stitching" To her, those doing it regularly for hours, as it is common in rural areas, where females spends longer time in needlework and doing it in night under a lamp, are prone to eye-sight problem," said she.

The needlework in Balochistan contains different designs and techniques. It varies from place to place. Different areas are famous for a distinct designs of needlework. For example, "Kawchik" needlework in Dera



Bugti area is different from the rest of Balochistan, and females from other areas may not be able to follow that designs. It needs special techniques to embroider "Kawchik" stitch. The "Kawchik" designs are made on female shawls and shirts. They are usually crafted on the front part and sleeves of a shirt. "Traditionally it was red, purple or blue colour needlework on stiffened and starched front part of a formal white female shirt, and ankles of a trouser; both shirt and trouser in same colour," said Mr. Mushtaq, the owner of the famous "Kashmir Crafts" on Jinnah road, Quetta. To him, the work was famous all over the sub-continent, and still popular all over the country. He, however, to his dismay, claimed that the number of those embroidering "Kawchik" is reduced. "It needs three week labour to complete one suit," said he. To him, now "Kawchik" is not necessarily followed in traditional style, but rather people like it more in contrasts.

Similarly, the needlework in Kalat and Khuzdar areas are liked in large. They are known as "Mosham ka". It contains all stitch work in different colours, usually red, green, black and gray, on white or yellow colour shirt and trousers. It is common on shawls, cushions, table covers, and bed sheets; it can be designed on "Saris". According to a lady, familiar with the "Mosham ka" needlework, "It can have different designs, however, all are handmade with great care. It can have use of tiny glass work." The "Jok" needlework of Sibi district is liked all over Balochistan. Showing a number of garments which had "Jok" embroidery on each of them, she said that a number of different colours thin threads were used in embroidering of "Jok" work. To her, nonetheless, no stitch work is possible without having tracing first. Those who embroider are not always responsible for the tracing designs; the designs many be given by those ordering the work.

The needlework of Muslim Bagh, Gulistan and Zhob, Pushto speaking areas, are different. It is, however, less expensive and requires less labour, as use of threads in these

cases is smaller. "A variety of designs are made on female clothes, including bridal dress and those of small kids in open and close stitching," said an embroiderer. To her, the influx of Afghan refugees in Balochistan after the Saur revolution in Afghanistan in Pathan areas, brought new designs and employment of needlework. She believed that Afghan women are good at embroidery, and they are actively engaged in crafting different designs of handicrafts. The designs they make can be seen in different handicrafts shops in Quetta.

Those who make the handicrafts, nonetheless, have not benefited from the art. It is commonly believed that in majority of cases, they are paid much below the cost of the efforts and labour put into. The majority of those skilled in this job belong to rural/tribal areas of Balochistan without any formal education and mobilization in life. They are mostly confined to their houses or then village surroundings without any vocational centers to improve their embroidery skills under scientific advancement. They receive orders from outside. They are visited by the owners/agents of boutiques or craft shops, and ordered different variety of works. After they complete the embroidery, they are paid for.

According to an owner of a handicraft shop, it is usually difficult for boutiques' owners to visit far-flung areas of Balochistan. In many cases, the order is passed through aged ladies familiar with the art. They from time to time visit cities and collect orders from people running industrial homes or boutique shops, and bring them back after they are done. Those who order, provide them with cloths, threads, and even design models. "They are paid after the work is done, and commission for persons taking and bringing them back," said he. "I have been in this business for the last 14 years, nonetheless, I have not seen the workers." He, however, admitted that he needed only good pieces of embroidery done, and benefited much from commercializing it inside and outside Pakistan. They were sold in expensive prices, though he declined to tell how much profit he received



usually on each piece of handicraft. He, nonetheless, agreed that the workers are paid many times below the costs of market value. "They are left with little choice of bargaining. They are poor and need a financial support for the talents" said the owner.

The handicrafts of Balochistan are famous for their beautiful and sophisticated designs. A variety of needlework designing, sold in expensive boutiques and crafts shops, show sale value in national and international markets. However, no encouragement is shown by the government or NGOs, to the promotion of those who actually craft them. They are persons having lived in poverty and ignorance with a necessary choice to uplift a meager income for their families by making them. They need broader support by the government and other agencies to make it more industrially advanced with regular wages and benefits for workers.

## Vanishing Juniper Forest

For the last many years, there is an ongoing debate over the conservation of juniper forest, the second largest in the world, in the Ziarat district of Balochistan. Though no concrete mobilization has been made to sort the problem out, and there is still a growing reduction in its size, the controversy, however, now seems to have gained national and international recognition to the problem to stop these precious trees from annihilation.

A Juniper (Joo nuh Purh) is an evergreen shrub/plant with a distinctive berrylike cones or fruits. It may be found in many parts of the world, but not in big forests except in USA, Mexico, Switzerland, and Pakistan. In Pakistan, its forest in Ziarat valley and surroundings spreads over 125,200 acre which to an estimation is not only the second largest, but is the thickest in the world, though its thickness has faded due to a larger destruction of trees.

Juniper's botanical name is "Juniperus Excelsa" which to a Botanist has different varieties though not much difference appears to a common man about its varieties. Junipers exist from a 3,000 to 10,000 feet altitude, though the ideal height for the productivity of juniper is 7,000 to 8,000 with low humidity, one of the reasons Ziarat and some other hilly areas of Balochistan have suitable climate where junipers can grow. "The trees on extreme altitude may be in prostrate conditions with more vulnerability to decay" said a Botanist. Its growth rate, according to an extensive research conducted by the Botany Deptt of Baluchistan University, its growth rate is one centimeter in eleven years, or in other words, a juniper tree adds one feet height in 60 to 80 years. "It is probably the slowest rate growth plant in the world." the report said. Each tree produces annual rings in their stems. The number of rings indicate number of years and reveal the age of a tree helping a botanist to calculate the age of a juniper tree.



The juniper forest in Ziarat is faced with a growing challenge of reduction in size where in the last three decades hundreds of thousands trees have been destroyed thus endangering its future existence. According to many surveys/reports, three factors are imminently responsible for reduction in its size. The first and major factor accountable is that a huge number of trees have illegally been cut off by people, particularly the residents of the area to meet their fuel and construction demands. The juniper wood is highly inflammable thus preferred to common wood for fuel use. During the British time, strict penalization was followed, said an aged native of Ziarat, "against all found or alleged for cutting the trees or branches off." After partition, however, the government was less restrictive against violators. Even in 1954, the provincial government had partially allowed its use by the resident on small scale by residents, a miscalculated concession. It encouraged cutting of trees and big branches every year without a check. In 1974, to check the growing disaster of junipers, the Government of Balochistan through legislation: Balochistan Regulation Act 1974, banned the use of juniper wood for any purpose. A penalty of one year rigorous imprisonment or 5,000 Rs, or both, was fixed against violators.

Despite all penalization, however, the destruction of junipers continued. Two factors have been immediately responsible for it. First, in Ziarat and its surroundings, like majority of areas in Balochistan, there is no gas system. People live in extreme poverty without much mobilization in life, even in some areas there is no electricity. They are left with an easy choice of cutting off branches and trunks if not trees for fuel purpose. Similarly, majority of them living in cottages made of wood and mud have been noticed chopping down juniper trees for roof and yard timber. Anybody visiting their hamlets in Ziarat valley and lower terrains, can see that a lot of wood from juniper is used for designing their houses. It

is rampant in winter when harsh snowy winter makes them more dependent for its use with little check from forest guards. Second, no regular supervision by forest watchmen is possible against the culprits. According to an Assistant Conservator in Ziarat, "the number of forest watchmen are too small and immobile to cover the whole area effectively through out the year." In his opinion, there is needed a separate force for the conservation of juniper areas. He, however wished, a gas system in the area or at least subsidized gas cylinder system for village people, lest juniper consumption as fuel source is stopped.

The second factor having posed a damage to juniper is a parasite: "Dwarf Mistlo". This parasite attacks the lower part of a healthy well grown tree and makes it hollow in few years. "A big number of trees, told a District Forest Officer, "during the past years were raised to ground because of the disease." Many experts from Pakistan Forest Institute, Peshawar and Faisal Abad Agricultural University Research Centres have conducted extensive research on this parasite, nevertheless, no remedial measures are found to stem the disease. Recently a team of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has allotted a huge amount of aid and research expertise for the conservation of junipers in Balochistan. They have been visiting the area to explore the possibility of stemming the future destruction. The one in Ziarat area are one of the few juniper forests in the world, and biggest in Asia. Juniper is a valuable plant which has many industrial and chemical implications. Its wood is issued in match factories, furniture manufacturing and timber purposes. Juniper wood resists decay, therefore, it is useful fence making in many western countries. The use of juniper for industrial purposes, nevertheless, not much encouraged because of its slowest regeneration. Still it is believed that its cultivation on broader scale in the areas where its growth is possible can meet the industrial demand of wood.

Its use for many chemical devices being used in



pharmaceutical industry for many medicines in different parts of the world. A kind of oil produced from its berries and leaves, other than flavor and perfume preparation, supports many medical formulas in skin and other diseases. Junipers are valuable; they need conservation.

## Crane Migration at Threat

Each year during the seasonal migration of cranes from Central Asian and Siberian habitats to warmer winter habitats in Pakistan, thousands of cranes are trapped alive, shot or injured by hunters. According to a report by the Wetland and Water flow Conservation in South and West Asia (WWCS & WA), the threat to cranes appears more on the major migratory routes and corridors in Balochistan and NWFP, specially Balochistan. They are targeted when they reach low-height flights for staging areas where can easily be entrapped during the night. The growing destruction of cranes during their migration has alarmed many international wildlife agencies, and they believe if the damage is not stopped the species may face an extinction. The crane is a long-necked, long legged, migratory bird with a naked or sparsely feathered head, and brown, gray or white plumage. It is found in temperate and tropical regions on all the continents except South America, Antarctica and the Pacific islands.

The largest number of cranes are found in Central Asian and Siberian lakes, and the majority of them migrate through Pakistan to warm areas habitats in India, Nepal and other reservoirs around the Indian Ocean. The tallest crane, in zoologists' analyses, is believed to be 5 feet tall with a wingspan that can measure upto 8 feet, a factor to their disadvantage as it enables them to be easily ensnared or targeted by hunters once they reach lower altitudes. According to a wildlife survey, three species of cranes enter Pakistan during the migratory season between September 21 to October 21. They are the common crane (*Grus Grus*), the Demoiselle Crane (*Grus Vigro*) and the Siberian crane (*Grus Leucogeranus*). The first two kinds, migrating in larger numbers, migrate from Central Asian habitats, while the third one comes from Siberia.



In Pakistan, the common migratory routes are the Dalbandin and Zangi-Nawar Zaro route in northern Balochistan and the Zhob-Kamar-din-Karez route in southern Balochistan with different staging areas. The major routes through NWFP are the D.I.Khan-Ramak and the D.I.Khan-Chasma routes stretching over a width of 100 miles over the river Indus, from where they fly over the plains and river beds in the Punjab to reach their winter destination. The cranes return to their summer (breeding) habitats through the same routes between March 20 to April 20. The wildlife report states that in the past a considerable number of migratory cranes stayed in many different marshlands and wet plains in Pakistan enroute, all ideal as crane habitats. However, the number has been greatly reduced in recent years mainly because of shooting and trapping which scare away the birds especially those that they have escaped earlier, from returning. According to the National Council for the Conservation of Wildlife (NCCW) in Pakistan, the cranes also fly to marshlands and unlike in Pakistan, they face little or no threat from hunters.

Cranes, like ducks and geese, are believed to be able to endure unfavourable weather and the hardships of storms very well indeed, though they do not breed during migration. A female crane lays not more than two eggs a season, which according to zoologists, is responsible for its relatively small numbers around the world. A female crane rarely hatches in captivity.

Two points of note: shooting and trapping have become serious threats. The flocks of cranes which normally fly over 3000 feet while migrating, select sandy or marshy range lands as staging points, more often during the night when they are more easily caught alive where they remain until dawn. The ratio of trappings, according to a survey conducted by NCCW is higher than ever. Over

a period of five years from 1985 to 90, about 20 out of every 100 hunted cranes caught were shot and the remaining 80 trapped alive. The 10 percent were injured beyond repair or killed during trapping efforts. The trapping of cranes is common in the Zhob area of Balochistan, and D.I.Khan and Bannu districts of NWFP. Now the practice has extended to the plains of Punjab across the Indus where inhabitants have picked up trapping techniques.

The trapping of cranes is possible only in the night. They are frequent in March-April after cranes return to summer habitats in Central Asia and Siberia. Tamed cranes in cages re used s decoys to lure them to fly lower. "Rainy and dark nights are excellent for crane trapping, though it is possible on moonlit nights too," said a crane trapper from Bannu. "Thunder and lighting frightens them. They are more likely to be attracted by the cries of tamed cranes and fly closer to find them. That is where the hunters are waiting for them." The device used for catching cranes called a "Savya" which is made of iron and of the size of a golf ball. It has a long string at the end. "The string is specially designed for this purpose and is strong enough to hold down 10 kilos of weight for hours, which is the minimum necessary to hold down a crane" explains a seasoned crane hunter. "It needs special training and technique to throw a Savya. Not just anyone can do it. An inexperienced trapper could easily hit either himself or his partners instead of the bird. I have trapped hundreds of cranes during the past many seasons without damaging or wounding many cranes. One who often damages a crane oil obviously not a good Savya thrower." When the cries of the approaching migratory cranes are heard overhead, the hunters whistle to the caged tamed cranes to elicit a loud response. As the curious cranes fly towards the trap, sometimes, as low as 10 feet from the ground, Savyas are thrown at them. A skilled thrower can cast a Savya upto



30 feet high. The Savya strikes the crane, spins around its neck, body or wings about half a dozen of times spinning get helpless from flying away. Cranes are largely trapped for both taming and flesh purposes. A number of professional hunters trap cranes every year and sell them in different parts of the country. According to one such trapper-seller, "I have made a lot of money this way. People from the upper class love to buy them for huge amounts of money to keep as pets in their homes." Once a crane is clapped of its wings, it is easy to tame.

Shooting of cranes is not as common as trapping is; nevertheless, a large number of them are shot during each season. Cranes that fly in flocks of 20 to 200 each, are easier targets for shotguns. One or the other gets hit even from a long distance with a long-range rifle. "many cranes that escape trapping during the night, fall victim to shotguns," said one hunter. "One night, I shot seven with my pump-style five-round shot-gun."

Many hunters therefore first wait for the trapper to finish their turn before opening their barrels on the confused and the rattling of their wings give them away. Unless stronger steps are taken to protect them, they might be gone forever.

## Houbara Bustard: A Step Short of Extinction

The threat to the survival of houbara bustard "Taloor" has greatly emerged in Pakistan by challenging the existence of the specy. Because of the excessive shooting and preying/nettig, its survival is at stake and is one step short of extinction. If no sanctuary is provided to them, a possibility of their complete disappearance from wildlife is there.

Houbara Bastard, which zoological name is *Chlamydotis Undulata*, is a migratory bird found in the continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In Asia, a larger number of them are found in grassland and light savanna habitats of Central Asia and Siberia, from where they migrate to warm habitats in Pakistan, India, Afghanistan and other warm area resorts around Arabian Gulf. Its size ranges from 2.5 feet to 4 feet in length with wingspan from 5 to 8 feet, and a weight of 4 to 10 lbs. Houbara bustards have a plumage mostly camouflage patterning on upper sides, and head and neck with distinctive patterns combining tow or more of gray, chestnut, black, white and buff. Males are more brightly colored and faster in flight than females.

Their migration usually start from 15 October to 15 November each year through different routes, most of them, as wildlife sources indicate, pass through Balochistan where vast arid plains and semi-desert of lower Balochistan, Punjab and Sind become their favourite winter habitats. According to a wildlife survey, if not disturbed by hunters and trappers, houbaras stay within a range of 10 to 15 miles area, many of them making nests, which is a bare scrape on ground, in the habitats they migrate to. They start migrating back to summer habitats from 20 February to 20 March, depending on the severity of weather. According to a zoological survey, houbara bustards may lay eggs, which are rare, during their



migration stay to warm areas habitats, but never hatch them. Laying an average score of 2-4 eggs a year, are hatched only in the home habitats.

The houbara bustards have met a perilous existence during the last many years due to excessive shooting and preying. It has particularly exceeded after Gulf Sheiks started visiting Pakistan, many concessions to them were provided by Pakistan governments, for their hunting.

The growing shooting craze amongst people in Pakistan which has brought a threat of extinction to many migratory and non-migratory game-birds, has threaten the existence of houbaras in large. Each year, thousands of houbaras fall a victim to shooters' lust all over the country. According to a wildlife department survey, majority of them are shot by affluent shikarees (hunters), including high ranking government officers, or at their behest with shooting interests for flesh purpose. The meat of houbara bustards, liked for its red-salty flesh, is commonly presented to high echelons by professional shikarees and served in important dinner parties as a delicacy of shikar- meat. A professional hunter once told me, "I shot fifty houbaras in 1990, and gave away to a notable MPA, who later on, presented them to district and divisional officers, such as commissioners, deputy commissioners and other civil and military officers to oblige them for personal benefits."

He who shot the houbaras, nonetheless, got paid on each of houbara, other then the fact he might have enjoyed many benefits from the boss he worked, including protection from wildlife watchers. Besides shooting himself, he guided many high-ranking officials, shooting trips where an equal number of houbaras were shot as a shooting interests of many. He believed that this encouraged many poor indigenous people to net for houbaras and sell them to parties at higher rate. According to a poacher, live houbaras can be sold, at times, from 2,000 to 5,000. Rs Many rich people buy houbaras for their private zoos. They are sold at handsome

costs during Sheiks' trips to their areas for houbara hunt.

There are two ways of killing a houbara: by shooting or preying with a falcons. The houbara bustard, usually don't flock in more than two, however, are easy to see in the habitats they feed on for omnivorous-shoots, wild-flowers, seeds, and small reptiles. Sensing the danger, they shrink behind a bush and does not fly until a party reaches closer to it, from where it may not be difficult for a volley of pellets of shot-guns. "A hunter with his light-bore rifle with a telescope can aim it from longer distance too," said a old hunter "anyway they are more vulnerable to shooters". The houbaras, like sand grouses, are chased in open jeeps, which in many shooters' opinion, make them more approachable to shooters' range as one can drive near to a flying houbara without fearing them much. "The throttling up the speed after a houbara coming out of bush, as it runs first few yards and then opens its wingspan to fly, can take a shooter more closer to it," told another houbara shooter. A party carrying a falcon can make them preyed with falcons, but preying with falcons has become very uncommon as falcons have become very expensive. "Only Sheiks can afford the price of a falcon for houbara hunting," said a falconer, "Previously many could afford it, but after the oil boon in 1973, they cannot."

"Sheiks have an indigenous taste for houbaras, but with falcons," said a falconer who accompanied them on many trips. He, nonetheless, revealed the fact, that few of Sheiks like to shoot houbara with their expensive England-made shot-guns too. "They camp in important zones where shooting trips, told a deputy conservator of forests, for other people are strictly prohibited." He told that the wildlife department were strictly ordered from above not to annoy them by letting any other, irrespective of his civilian or military rank, to shoot in the area reserved for Sheiks.

A hunting party may consist of fewer Sheiks, nonetheless, the number of entourage usually comprise 30 to 50 men. The Sheiks drive all the day in their vehicles with



falconers beside to hunt anyone fly in their way. One falcon is set after each houbara. soon it leave the ground. A good falcon chases its hunt in circles without letting it fly higher or longer. It attacks a houbara from side and tries to firm its talon over it necks. The houbara, slower in speed, struggles to fly longer by not allowing its neck grappled by falcon, though it receives many injuries ion wingspan. A falcon, especially trained purposely for houbara-hunt, does not chase houbara longer lest it is lost.

Once a falcon succeeds grappling over its chase, it brings her down to ground. "The Sheiks enjoy the brutality of falcons against houbaras," said the falconer, "and spend millions each year on all this. They buy good falcons, sometimes, 700 hundred thousands Rs. each." They are well organized and mobile for hunting houbaras with their high range walkie-talkies that enables them to inform one another about the whereabouts of any houbara escaping a party. "They sweep an are of 30 miles everyday," said a local who accompanied a hunting party. "They kill an average of 35 to 50 houbaras a day, majority of them with falcons." Sometimes, a party may lose a falcon after it chases a houbara long way and becomes untraceable for trackers. Each party has a couple of horse riders, hired from local populace at 3,000 to 5,000 Rs. a day, who follow only falcons and releases it soon after it attacks a houbara and brings it to ground. A falcon after hunting a Houbara if not followed in a short while, it might devour the houbara by leaving not much for hunters' taste. A party after hunting in one area moves to another area and camp their caravan for another fresh round of houbara hunting. "The hunt for houbara, told a houbara informer, continues until they are reduced to none."

The tragedy of houbaras exceeds due to excessive shooting/netting; its survival in Pakistan has become at stake. Its extinction is now a step short of extinction, and if no arrangements are adapted for its survival, and fair possibility is that it might vanish from the wildlife scene in the area.

## Chakor: A Permanent Open Season

A decade or two back, areas of Balochistan were teemed with chakors where shooting parties could find them in abundance in different regions. But due to prolific hunting, the inactivity of Wildlife agencies, the number of chakors in existence, like other places in Pakistan, have been dropping rapidly in Balochistan. Once, these birds moved free and undangered, but now it possible to envisage when they will be altogether extinct.

It is not difficult to answer the question of "what happened to them or where have they gone?" with a straight answer. Not one, but many factors and groups play a role in the disappearance of Chakors. The major factor, nonetheless, accountable for the tragedy is shooting.

The Chakor, which zoological name is *Alectoris Chookar*, is a popular, though not common, white flesh game-bird. As these birds are now not in big number, hunting them is far more of an adventure to sportsmen, than other wildfowls e.i., quail, grouse, partridges, pheasants.

Chakors have a purple, gray and red feathers, plump bodies and short tails. The male of the species has darker colour and a black ring around its neck and more red colour which enhances its beauty. Chakors are non-migratory birds. Chakors are found in mountain areas not below the height of 4,000 feet. In summer they remain on high altitude, usually above the height of 8,000. Chakors don't make high altitude, long distance flights. They normally live in mountain terrains and deep side mountain beds which have medium size but not very thick bushes.



Normally, it flies within a small distance not exceeding half a mile. These birds fly in formations almost 5 to 10 feet apart from each other at the height of 40 to 70 feet. They fly with a speed of 50 to 60 mph. Flying all of a sudden out of a bush, pulling a tight turn at an angle of 45 degree, adjacent, straight or right, stands a perfect clay-pigeon style trill for shooters; commonly, a 12-bore shotgun.

The excessive shooting of chakors without any bag-limit, as with the case of partridges all over the country, has greatly threatened the existence of these birds almost in all areas where they are found. The shooting regulations, with the open season marked from October 15 to February 15 does not restrict shooters during the other days of year. Even during March-April, the chakors breeding season, they do not regard as sacrosanct. When shooting is officially allowed, hunters come in large numbers. If a shooting party has 10 to 15 members, it is not likely that a chakor flying out of its hideout will escape all shots coming out of barrels. "The largest parties are made up of officials and local bigwigs," said a forest officer, "in these gatherings shooting as many chakors as they can is the common norm." To him, a party shot 300 chakors in two days in a forest area near Ziarat. Many professional hunters and landlords in order to oblige bigwigs, helped by the game department or local administration, have found that organising a shooting party is an easy way of gaining respect and admiration. The officials, if they so chose, did not even have to shoot their own game, that was arranged too. Men were hired to shoot the birds which were later supplied to them as a delicacy of "Shiekhar meat". According to one professional hunter who was occasionally hired by a local landlord, "I shot 400 to 500 chakors per season for a notable who later on supplied to the high ranking officials. Anyone with the right partonage, the right contacts can make his way into

sanctuaries and reserved areas without any interference from wildlife authorities.

Similarly, shooting jaunts are still common in the case of partridges, ducks, sand grouse and houbara bustards, even in those areas publicly prohibited for shooting. A game watcher of the wildlife department in Loralai/Zhob with a large game reserve teeming with chakors told me, "A common man would dare less to shoot or he can easily be stopped in these reserve because of the strict surveillance and fine, however, if big shots, such as high ranking civil and military officials come to shoot, non one can stop them. I have seen such expeditions for myself when shooters have left with big bags."

Besides the natural calamity of flood and settlement disturbing the species of chakors, poaching/netting has reduced their number. Poaching is common far-flung mountain areas where a trained class of people adapt different tactics of poaching, the most common being netting when the birds come out feed. It is most common in the areas with scarcity of water, as it is possible in Balochistan, where flocks of chakors come to water area and are net. The poaching of newly-hatched chicks is also common just after breeding season, however, the "poaching of chicks is less preferable," said a poacher, to a grown one as a chick is not sold and its look after needs a lot of care. Poaching is carried out either in an individual capacity or the poacher is hired by a party. The numerous variety of birds existing in Pakistan make poaching a highly lucrative business all year. Birds are valued for two reasons: as pets, and for their meat. The poaching of ducks, cranes, sand grouse, houbara bustards is common, however, the nonmigratory birds, who are easier to trap, suffer more. "The poaching of chakors is not difficult," said a poacher, "as they flock together and feed badly on grains and water." In summer, when they remain on height,



become rather easier as their places are more certain. Agreed the poacher. According to another poacher, parties pitch tent on heights and hunt for place where they flock. To him, chakor, compared to other birds trapped for sale, stand more market value and can be sold anytime in any city. People keep them in their houses even at higher costs.

The poacher agreed that he poaches a large number of chakors every year and sell them in market. Male chakors earn more money than female chakors, because of their outward beauty and as they chirp merrily even when put in cages. Many shooters, not confident of their skill may purchase a tamed bird, who then acts as a decoy. The wild chakor answering the tamed ones call will soon be shot down. Chakors are beautiful to grow and people pay large amount to buy them. In Balochistan, they are openly sold in big number. People also buy them for fighting purposes after they are trained to. Chakor fighting, like cock fighting, is popular in Balochistan, and large bets are offered on their fighting. The chakor, like other game birds, is facing a threat of extinction because of excessive shooting and poaching. A speculation is that if its extinction is not stopped, it will disappear from the wildlife scene. We all will miss it as we do in case of many other species existed in past.

## Sandgrouse: No Bag Limit

The Sandgrouse is a beautiful migratory game bird. Zoologically it belongs to pteroclididae family. Its plumage is a dull tone of buff, ochre, rufous, olive, brown, black and white. Males are mostly spotted or barred, and have black, white or chestnut chest bands.

It travels every year, between November 15 to December 15, from the summer habitats in central Asia and Siberian mountain ranges to the winter habitats in lower terrains of Balochistan and upper deserts of eastern Punjab. They migrate to desert areas of Tharparkar and sandy zones of Sindh, nonetheless, majority of birds migrated to Pakistan, in zoologists' analysis, stay within areas of Balochistan as the habitats in Balochistan provide them ideal feeding and asylum grounds as savanna and bushveld habitats with lot of grits, dry seeds, insects, and small mollusks are likable habitats for sandgrouse to stay in.

The sandgrouse migration, however, for the last many years, has appeared at threat. The major threat to the spiny migration comes from shooting and trapping, particularly shooting. The excessive shooting of Sandgrouse all-over, as the wildlife department surveys show, is mainly accountable to the reduction of the number of spiny en route migration through Pakistan.

The excessive shooting has not only reduced the size of flocks in migration, but habits and routes of migration. According to a wildlife watcher in the Pishin district of Balochistan, the area known as one of the corridors of sandgrouse migration, to Pakistan and India, the sandgrouse migration is considerably reduced in size.



"I have been observing the sandgrouse migration since I joined the wildlife department in 1970. Previously they would fly in big flocks, sometimes more than a thousand birds in a flock. They are not anymore," renegade he.

The shooting of sandgrouse for flesh purpose is common all over. Since they fly and feed in flocks, therefore, shooting of them is very easy. They are mostly shot in mountains and sandy plains where they remain during day time to feed. "The easiest way to hunt them," said an old shikaree, "in an open jeep with two to three gun-men." The jeep chases them in different directions in the fields where the birds are believed to feed. "The birds are not easy to see, because of their camouflage colour, and it needs a good eye sight to trace them," said he. "Once they are seen, it needs a shrewd technique to reach closer to them without fearing them to fly away." In his analysis, the more closer one can succeed to go near the hunt, the number of chances a party can have to shoot them in large number. He believed that birds don't fear a vehicle, nevertheless, it is good if the persons sitting in jeep are wearing a camouflage clothes.

The shooting of sandgrouse is commonly carried through shot-guns, preferably a double barrel, however, a privileged shikaree with a five-shot pump shot gun may be able to fall more birds. "As jeep party succeeds driving closer to the hunt, a volley of cartridges come out of barrels," said another sandgrouse hunter. To him, it depends on the size of flock, and shooting capabilities of a person, though shooting of sandgrouse is easier than other game birds. The first shots are taken on sitting flocks, after they are shot in air. He bragged of once shooting 380 sandgrouses a day with his four-man shooting party in vast mountain resort near Spinkai in Zhob district. The

other way of shooting the bird is to sit the gun-men in line while hiding on the opposite direction of feeding flocks, and send a person or vehicle from behind. The sandgrouses approached by a person fly in opposite direction, not usually above the height of 150-200 feet over the shooters hiding for. In case there is not enough bushes, then shooters lie on ground and as the birds fly closer, they take their positions and shoot. The shooting of birds, however, is rather difficult this way.

Another way of shooting sandgrouse is on the place where they come to feed on water. "It is early the morning and at sun set time," said a wildlife watcher, "They fly down in flocks near water mostly in far flung areas. The bird is disciplined. It sitting in flocks, feed one by one," said a shikaree. A shooter having traced the water place, hid behind a bush or ditch a trench to hid himself before the arrival of birds. The birds arrive in flocks, and as they arrive are struck with a volley of shots. "They may be allowed to sit, and they shot them in number," replied another shooter. To him, it is easier to go for a big bag this way as they are in flocks and much closer. One can shoot them even they fly up. When asked about whether they always come on same place to water-feeding. He said, "No, not always, nonetheless, once they fly to a place, they keep on for a week or two. However, if feared, as usually in shooting them, then they don't."

The sandgrouse are poached in big number near the feeding areas, particularly near the water-feeding area. The poacher, trained in netting birds, spread a net, usually of 40 to 50 feet on ground on the area where the birds are expected to sit/feed. Once they are in number, the poacher hiding in a trench or inside a bush, pushes the thread holding the net, and gets them trapped. They have



sale value as the poachers sell them where people either buy for flesh purpose or taming them in their houses. Because of the outward beauty, especially the male, the people like to tame them. The bird, however, is not easy to tame. Also, a common observation is that as summer arrives, they are hard to live. They in captivity lose weight and are reduced in size.

The tragedy of sandgrouse shooting continues without any limitation as has happened in case of other game birds. They have been shot and poach, particularly shot, excessively for flesh purpose. The sandgrouse is a famous red flesh game bird, and is commonly liked for its taste. The bird is usually two pounds in weight. Also, a fantasy about its meat for sex purpose, and use of its stomach for removing kidney stone, has inclined people to shoot them in large and sell them. According to a professional shooter in D.I.Khan district, "I shoot in big number near the Sulieman mountain range in Zirkani area every year, and sell them at 50 Rupees a bird. They are sold like hot cakes." He added that people buy them to provide to high ranking officers as a delicacy of Shikar meat.

The sandgrouse is a famous game .spicy which migrate to different winter habitats in Pakistan from Central Asian habitats every year. The bird, however, because of excessive shooting and netting, is not only reduced to small number in migration with a threat of extinction if no necessary measurements are adapted to provide it sanctuary from disaster in Pakistan.





### **The Author**

*The Author was born in August 1955 at D.I.Khan. He received his early education at D.I.Khan where he graduated from Government Degree College in 1976. He did his masters' in Political Science from University of Peshawar in 1978; and later on, from the University of Arizona in 1987. He began his teaching career in 1979 as a lecturer in the Political Science department at University of Balochistan, Quetta.*

*The author has a strong aptitude for writing. He has published twenty research articles relating to comparative politics and international relations in the Pakistani and foreign journals of international repute. He is a regular article/feature contributor to many leading English newspapers in Pakistan.*